

Shoulder with horn

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PRISONERS ALL

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Prince of the Jews

FRITZ VON UNRUH

WAY OF SACRIFICE

OSKAR MARIA GRAF

PRISONERS ALL

PRISONERS ALL

BY OSKAR MARIA GRAF

Translated from the German by

MARGARET GREEN

NEW YORK: ALFRED A. KNOFF

MCM



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P R E F A C E

THE FOLLOWING PAGES *cover the period from my eleventh to my twenty-fifth years ; they begin with 1905 and close with 1919. I finished writing the first part in April, 1920, and wrote the second during the years 1924 to 1926.*

I have invented nothing, extenuated nothing, written nothing with a tendencious purpose.

Word succeeded word at the call of memory as I lived through the past anew. It is the aim of this book to be no more than a human document of the times.

OSKAR MARIA GRAF

Munich, end of July, 1926

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PART ONE

Early Days

1

A Break in my Life

ON THAT MAY AFTERNOON when our teacher suddenly entered the room, came up to my sister Anna and myself, and told us that we might go home because our father was very ill, I felt no emotion whatever. Out in the road we spoke very little and looked serious. At bottom, we were pleased that we were through with the dull arithmetic lesson. We were good at our lessons and enjoyed going to school, but I disliked arithmetic. There was no element of surprise in it; everything was clear and ran smoothly.

It was a marvellously clear and sunny day. The meadows around us were fresh and green and dotted with flowers, the apple-trees on either side of the road were in full bloom.

When we reached the village a peasant woman met us; she stopped and said: "Go home, your father is seriously ill. He is in a bad way." We hastened our steps.

In the house there was a kind of stillness. We went into the kitchen, which also served as a living-room, and saw Mother busying herself with bottles at the fireplace. She just said, "Go up to Father," and burst into tears. We put down our satchels and went upstairs. When we entered the room we began to cry. Why, we could not tell. I felt no sorrow, only a slight shudder. In the room there was a strong smell of medicines and perspiration. My brother Eugene sat by the bed in his uniform and gazed unceasingly at his father. Theresa and Emma stood behind him. Both were crying quite softly. Max, my eldest brother, stood against the wall and stared at us. Maurus was leaning against the window, and Laurence whispered to us: "Go to him." His face was swollen with crying.

We approached the bed rather timidly and both said together: "Father." The sick man lay motionless and already the death-rattle was in his throat. His face was uncannily yellow and sunken. My younger sister leaned against the bed and sobbed again: "Father." At that he moved his head a little and gazed at her silently. Everyone looked at him, and then began to cry aloud. Eugene wanted to put his arm behind Father's neck to help raise him. But at that moment the dying man uttered a coughing sound, his body became straight and stiff, his face twitched, and the whites of his eyes were terribly prominent. This was the coming of death.

Laurence ran to the door and, opening it, called out: "Mother!" We all stood round the bed sobbing, and folded our hands. Only Max remained calm. Our mother came in and approached the bed, crossed herself, cast a sorrowful glance up to Heaven, folded her hands, and softly murmured a prayer, while the tears coursed over her wrinkled cheeks. After a little time she crossed herself again, bent over the dead man, and closed his eyes. Meanwhile, Theresa and Emma lit the two candles which had been left there after the priest had given extreme unction; they fetched some holy water and sprinkled it over the dead man. With a sorrowful voice my mother began to repeat the Lord's Prayer, and we all chimed in, one after the other. Then we left the room and went down silently into the kitchen. The funeral was arranged, a woman sent for to lay my father out, and the priest secured to conduct the service. By six o'clock the hearse stood at the door, and the coffin was carried into it amid loud lamentations and taken to the priest's. We and many of the villagers walked behind it with bent heads and told our beads. When the coffin was placed in the chapel, people came up to my mother and my elder brothers and sisters and pressed their hands. They looked with pity at us children and said, "Poor children," or something of the kind.

The next day we were wakened by solemn bells which tolled throughout the morning. The flag of the Veterans' Club was lowered three times into the grave, and guns were fired nearby, for my father had taken part in the war of 1870-71.

We had midday dinner at the inn and our relatives and cousins came too. All manner of stories were told about my father, and people recalled what he had said on this occasion and that. In the afternoon the whole family and the relatives went down to the lake and drank coffee together in the restaurant. It all seemed like Sunday to us, and we children really enjoyed it — only now and again we thought of our father and felt sad for a fleeting moment.

From that time on everything was different at home. We had a flourishing bakery and a grocer's shop and confectioner's as well, some meadow-land and forest, four cows, a horse, and, as a rule, four or five pigs in the sty. My mother's home had been a large farm, and my father was a baker. When they married the house had been quite small; now, because of my father's love of building, it had grown to a stately mass.

My departed grandfather, Laurence Graf, who had been an accountant, dreamed all his life of such a house. But as he never prospered in his unprofitable business, he began to rely on some swift stroke of luck. He gambled in a lottery with passionate eagerness, and often spent his last penny in this way, bringing distress on his large family. But he only grew poorer and poorer, and when he died the property was encumbered with debt and the house in ruins.

Towards the end of his life my father lost his health, and Max took partial control when he returned from military service. His manner in exercising authority was curt and rough, and provoked violent scenes while my father lived. Once, indeed, the old man seized a knife, broke out into curses, and was about to attack his son. My mother flung herself between them.

After that the two did not speak to each other, and Father took to drink. He ordered Affental wine from the wood, sat all day grumbling on the sofa, and gulped down glass after glass. He had his meals alone so that he need not see Max. The two avoided each other as far as they could, and when one was obliged to speak to the other there was directly such fierce quarrelling that we children screamed and ran away. After these scenes we generally found our mother

broken down and in tears. Father went out, got drunk at some public house, and did not come home till late at night.

We all hated Max. When he entered the house something alien came with him. He lashed us with his sharp, biting words. Gentleness was unknown to him, he was always quick to strike. With his hand, with a dough-mixer, with anything nearby. Eugene, the only one of us who was his equal in strength, was serving his term in the army. Laurence, or Lenz, as we called him, worked with the journeymen at night, Maurus was learning the confectionery trade in Karlsruhe, and Emma was being taught dressmaking in Munich. Theresa, who came next to Max in age, stood apart from the rest of us. In the morning she delivered bread with the horse and cart, and for the rest of the day she worked in the house. Max did not dispute with her, for she knew how to answer back. The two took no notice of each other, but they were bitter enemies.

After our father's death we younger ones held more and more together. Lenz read Karl Mayer's books a great deal, ordered sporting rifles secretly, and when he went on his bread-rounds in the morning shot pheasants, hares, and squirrels, hid them in the bread basket, and roasted them at night with the help of the journeymen. At first I was not initiated into the secret. It was not until one day I had to accompany Lenz that he led me into the wood, fetched his rifle out of a hole in the rocks, and told me everything. I was all eagerness. Another sporting rifle was straightway ordered for me from Solingen. Such things were addressed to our village shoemaker, to be paid for on delivery. We secured his silence by a present of bread.

As time went on we were no longer content with this solitary sport. All the boys of our own age in the village were let into the secret, and on Sundays we scoured the woods. Everything that crossed our path was shot down. Anyone who killed an animal at the first shot was awarded the "hunter's prize," that is, the rifle which had been bought with our joint money became his sole property. Gradually the affair was rumoured abroad. A policeman came to our house. We indeed lied with a will, but there was a terrible quarrel between Lenz and Max which ended in Lenz's going to the town

to look for work, and we never heard from him again. Later, after wandering the length and breadth of Germany in truly romantic fashion, he took ship for America from Hamburg.

About this time I left the day-school, and I, too, had now to help at night. Max kept a sharp watch on me. I was thoroughly intimidated, and for a long time I did not rebel. But on Sundays we spoiled the new benches provided by the recently established local Improvements Society — Max being on the committee — tore up young trees, or set fire to a hayrick. Something within us drove us to do these things. We actually regarded them as our appointed task, and we had no peace. "Lenz must be avenged," I always said. Something must be done. We hated the villagers. At that time we read *The Downfall of the Seminole Indians*. How unspeakably beautiful was the close: "The last of the Seminoles bends over the dead chief, cuts open a vein and drinks his blood, which cries aloud for eternal vengeance. Then he goes to the Sioux tribe and joins in the struggle against the white men. . . ."

There were three of us: Martín, a school friend of mine, my sister Anna, and I. We met one day in the depths of a cornfield outside the village. I sketched out the scheme of vengeance and the other two knelt down, raised their hands solemnly, and said: "I swear." We had agreed that if one of us betrayed anything he must suffer the utmost penalty. Then we set to work. The miller had left his iron plough standing in the field. We took it to pieces and threw the parts in all directions. The innkeeper by the lake was building a little wooden hut on the Eitzal Hill. We slaved away for four Sundays — constantly interrupted by innocent people on their walks — till we had loosed the earth beneath it, so that it went crashing down the hillside. That was a gigantic achievement; the trees were broken on its downward path, earth and stones crashed after it, and the wooden monster rolled on with terrifying force. Down below people all ran around as if there were a fire, but they could do nothing. There was a terrible crash, and the whole house was smashed to bits. We were out of the way long before this, and were playing innocently at building houses with empty packing-cases in our yard.

The mayor left his foals out in the pasture. We made a channel for the water from the stream nearby to run into the meadow, made a fire in the middle of the field, and drove the animals again and again over fire and water, till their coats reeked. Then we moved away the willow fencing and the foals galloped away in terror. It was not till late at night that they were discovered, trembling and terrified, on a narrow rocky path in the Castle grounds.

We stole table-cloths from the tables laid in the inn garden, and burnt them; we destroyed the finest beeches and oaks, so that they withered. People always said: "The baker's brats have done that!" But when on one occasion they actually spoke to my mother, she said: "Nonsense! It's impossible. Come, how could such little children do that!" Strange to say, Max heard little or nothing about it.

Something must be done! Our vengeance was far too slight. To our minds nobody was really hurt by it.

Once again we ordered rifles. We resumed our shooting, only this time we left what we shot lying where it fell. One journeyman had been sentenced to three days' imprisonment on account of the affair with Lenz. He refused to have any more to do with such goings on, and at night he always threatened to beat me. What could we do but keep it all secret? Every Sunday we renewed our oath, for gradually we came to scent danger on all sides. After a time the ceremony became rather more romantic. I was the chief, and after my sister and Martl had taken the oath we joined in eating a stick of "Andreas Hofer fig coffee" which we had stolen from the shop. It tasted horribly bitter and gave us stomach-ache, but just because the stuff was so nasty we regarded it as a kind of conspirators' communion-bread. For some unexplained reason, we called the fig coffee "Claro," because it sounded foreign and Indian and was printed on the cigar-boxes in our shop. Sometimes when we met on week-days, if one of us had an inkling of threatened danger, we whispered to one another: "We must eat Claro again!" The words were understood and no further questions asked.

We had to work hard. I was waked in the evening by the journeyman, in the winter at eleven, in the summer at nine. We worked right

through the night. At six in the morning Mother counted the loaves and put them in my basket, laid rolls on the top, and filled the knapsack for Anna, who was already waiting in the kitchen, yawning sleepily. And out we went into the cool morning air until midday. Anna continued her rounds the whole afternoon. I had to help make cakes. I beat up white of egg beside Max, mixed sandcake, kneaded shortbread. At five o'clock I was allowed to go to bed. That was the regular day's work. Round about Easter and Whitsuntide and Christmas I was often much later. I had besides to chop wood and cut chaff. And all the time Max's threatening voice, like the crack of a whip: "Hurry up! Quick march!" For this work Mother paid me five marks a week in summer, and in winter three every Sunday. At Christmas and on my birthday something was put into the savings bank for me, and I could see it entered in my book. But Max must know nothing about it. He indeed had his own ideas about me. When he returned from military service he said in his offhand way: "The boy must go to sea!" He cut a bow for me and wanted to teach me to shoot, but it was badly made and the archery practice soon stopped. Then I was to learn to play the zither. As soon as I got home from school I must start practising. Always the same, first learning the notes, and then the melody, "Rosebush, elderblossom." But I learnt nothing, in spite of the utmost severity on his part. I bribed the tailor who taught me to play the zither, with bread and money for beer. He took no further trouble. Zither-playing was a torment to me and I hated it. One evening when Max was going out and I was to go to the tailor's, I hid behind an adjoining fence and watched for a long time, till my brother was out of earshot. Then I opened the zither-case, put in sand and stones, and dropped the hated instrument into a neighbour's fish-pond. Next day, when I was asked to play, the zither was not to be found. I told lie after lie and was severely beaten in the end, but I was free. From that time onwards discipline was exceedingly strict. Fortunately, however, I left school soon afterwards and worked by night.

Thus things went on for two years. Gradually our Indian campaign of vengeance ceased. One of the journeymen had a book entitled

How Can I Become an Inventor? I read it, and it gave a new turn to my life. The same shoemaker who had taken delivery of the rifles for us procured technical books for me. I began to draw. All my writing materials were hidden in the garret. I invented something — It was a bootjack. I sent the drawing to a patent agent in Cassel. He replied with a most encouraging letter holding out great hopes. But, he said, I must send him seventy-five marks.

Seventy-five marks! My heart beat high. With that sum one could earn thousands, once the patent was taken out. I showed the letter in strict confidence to Theresa. She was aflame with eagerness. Mother was taken into the secret. I received the money and sent it off. In five weeks I found myself the owner of a German Imperial patent, sent printed prospectuses in all directions, and awaited the result, confident of victory. Every day I went to the shoemaker's. Nothing but refusals.

One firm asked for a sample. Curse it! A sample! A sample! That meant another sixty marks, and once more Mother and Theresa gave me the money secretly. The sample arrived at the shoemaker's and — it would not work. One refusal came after another. Already Theresa was smiling. I took comfort. Even Edison did not become a millionaire overnight. I must stick to it. I must be indefatigable.

A new scheme! An honest man wrote from Mecklenburgh that all patent agents were frauds. He would do the job for the low price of eighty marks — he enclosed an exact and honest statement — and would promise to refund the money if the invention did not sell. There really are still honest men in the world, I said to myself.

My second invention started on its career. The drawings were sent to Mecklenburgh by registered post, and again within five weeks the second patent was secured. A cork which drew itself automatically. Something which everyone would buy; it would sell in millions!

This time I wrote personal letters to the manufacturers. I wrote in quite a friendly style. Refusals. I wrote in a yet friendlier style: "Dear Mr. Bayer, I have an invention which I am sure you will be able to turn to account in your factory. I shall be glad to dispose of

all the rights to you for the small sum of a thousand marks. Yours most sincerely, or Yours faithfully, or very cordially yours, Oskar Graf, Inventor." Refusal! I chose this formula: "Sir, I have invented a very salable article. I enclose a sample. I will dispose of all the rights to you for five hundred marks, or would accept less. Please take it off my hands. I would, in fact, accept three hundred marks. Yours sincerely, Oskar Graf, Inventor." Refusal. Or no answer at all. The wretches would not even give me fifty marks for it, not even thirty. The world simply refused to recognize my genius.

About this time Maurus came home from Karlsruhe. He brought books with him. Quantities of numbers of *Die Jugend*, a volume of Heine, Stifter's books in the Reclam edition, a volume of Uhland, Lessing's dramatic masterpieces, *Napoleon's Love Affairs and Mistresses*, Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, *The Lady of the Sea*, and Viktor Scheffel's stories. He spoke High German with something of a Swabian accent, told me of a book about the Emperor William II entitled *Himself*, and read Shakespeare to me. This he did with such passion, such intensity, as to fire my ambition. I began to read his books. But within a few weeks Maurus quarrelled with Max and gave everything up. After a fight, with bloodshed, tears, and cries of rage, he packed his trunk and went off to Bamberg.

What next?

A cow fell ill. Four pigs died. The horse died of colic. The mayor lent Max a book called *Veterinary Surgery at Home*. I read it at night. Slowly my interest was aroused. Moreover, I was turning over in my mind what profession I really wanted to follow. Again a cow fell ill. The district veterinary surgeon came and gave us a lecture in the byre. That put it into my head. I made up my mind: I will be a veterinary surgeon.

The cow succumbed. "Infection," said the veterinary surgeon.

Infection? What does that mean?

I ordered *Diseases of the Cow* from Parey's in Berlin, as the first book for use in my future profession. It was a dark blue, thin, elegant little volume with fine gilt lettering. There!

I read and read. Suddenly I was pulled up sharply. There, among the other words and just like them stood the word, "immune."

But what did it mean? What did it mean?

I wrote at once for a dictionary of veterinary terms. And then I set myself to learn by heart. From A to Z. Every delivery round with the bread was occupied with reciting aloud the most outlandish words. If by chance the district veterinary surgeon drove past I took off my cap and ran with a beating heart some little distance behind his trap. For this man was something of a god to me; his head must be packed with what he had learned by heart! More than I could grasp!

After *Diseases of the Cow* came books on horse-breeding, diseases of the dog, and the different breeds of poultry, then sheep scab, and, finally, even books on breeding fish. All our family were ambitious, and each of us was spurred by an intense eagerness to dominate the others, to rule those around us. Not one of us could bear to be behind the rest in ability. What you have learnt is your own, I thought, and perhaps you will astonish your future teachers. I remember well how I began reading books with Maurus. We vied with each other in our reading, and I was filled with triumphant pleasure when I could say: "Ah, you haven't read that yet! That is something quite different."

The syllabus of the Agricultural College at Pfarrkirchen was announced in the paper. I made my plans: I will begin there and finish at the University College of Veterinary Surgery in Munich. I did not want to go to a veterinary school. That was not good enough. It must be something with "University" in the title. I read my vocabularies aloud on the way to customers' houses and before I went to sleep, and it was extraordinary how the driest material was tinged with emotion for me. Upstairs under the leaden roof a fine collection of books was packed in a large card-board box. Every day before I went to bed I climbed up to the garret, listened with a beating heart to make sure that nobody was coming upstairs, took the box out slowly, stroked the smooth covers of my books, and picked one out. I never went to sleep until I had put the precious treasure under

the mattress, for if it had come out that I had the books, I should have been beaten till I could not stand. In the first place the books cost a terrible lot of money, and besides, since the failure of my zither lessons, my orders were that I was just to be a baker. That was settled.

The weeks slipped past. My secret consumed and tormented me. I must tell. At four o'clock in the morning Mother came downstairs and put on the water to boil for the coffee in the kitchen. I always repeated the same complaint to her. The journeymen were rough, they beat me because I often fell asleep. One of them once threw a sack weighing two hundredweight at my head, so that my whole body seemed broken. But it was no good. Max must hear nothing about it. My mother always cried when I complained, and said with annoyance: "If only we could have peace for once in a way."

But — something must happen. Something must!!

"To-day I shall tell Max! that I want to go to Pfarrkirchen. You must tell him. I simply won't be a baker! I don't want to. Each of the others has been allowed to learn something: Eugene was sent to the Commercial College, Maurus went to Karlsruhe and now he is a confectioner; Max just turned Lenz out, and he means to get rid of me someday," I wailed. Every day the same complaint, dogged and sullen.

It quite wore my mother out. Her face grew more and more gloomy and she gazed at me helplessly.

"Hm — I don't know. Veterinary surgeon. There's nothing in that! A baker can always earn his wage — there is always something to eat," she argued. But it was no good. I was as obstinate as a mule. The term at Pfarrkirchen began on September 15th. I grew more and more insistent, and day followed day without success.

"He will only give you a good beating, and there you are," said my mother, referring to Max.

"If he beats me to death, I will never change my mind," I replied stubbornly. Meanwhile, nothing happened. I had an idea. I wrote to Eugene. The man of violence could do nothing to him. Nor could

there be a fight and an uproar, for Eugene was in Augsburg serving his term in the army.

I wrote: "Dear Eugene, Nobody at home will listen to me, and I believe that I have ability, if only I can study; so I am writing to you to beg you to make it possible, as only you can. If you don't help me I shall go to the dogs at home. I would like to go to the Agricultural College at Pfarrkirchen on September 15, and then to Munich to the University College of Veterinary Surgery, for I want to be a vet. But I can't tell Max — you know that. He would only give me a good beating, the brute. But I must be a vet, or I shall go to the dogs. So do help me. Just write a good, strong letter to Max. He is afraid of you, but he will only beat me. But don't tell Max in your letter that I wrote to you, or he will beat me for that, too. I will send you something to eat, if you will help me. Your loving brother, Oskar."

A few weeks later — it was September 8th — I came home from my bread rounds and spoke low to Mother, aside at the fireplace: "Have you seen anything? Hasn't Eugene written yet?"

Mother spoke out loud, so that I had to calm her: "If only I could have peace once in a while! — Just go on as a baker — you will earn a much better wage."

Max heard her. It was his habit to sit at the writing-table in the next room about this hour of the day, and the door was open.

"What's that?" he asked roughly.

"Oskar wants to be a vet, and the term is just going to begin, he says," answered my mother plaintively. My whole body was in a tremble. I was tense with fearful anxiety. My heart beat loudly. I stood there and waited, for now something must happen that would be decisive for the whole course of my life. Intermittently and rapidly, I pictured the time at Pfarrkirchen almost as clearly as if I were already there and were going to the lectures from my lodgings every day in my Sunday clothes.

Then Max suddenly got up and stood in the doorway and said: "What do you want?" He made a threatening face at me and shouted: "Fool, fool, just listen to me! — What good would it be

to you? Schatzlpeter has been studying eight years and has done nothing to this day! — I'll cure you of your notions! ”

And that was the end. At bottom, I was glad that the affair had passed off so easily, without blows and uproar. But my whole soul was filled with rage against Max, and I vowed savage vengeance.

I went on working at night in the bakery, slaved by day, and gradually lost interest in veterinary surgery. It was strange, after a phase of tense eagerness, there always followed an unconscious slackening and dulling of energy. The search began afresh. The dust lay thick on my inventions under the floor of the garret, my books on veterinary surgery lost their fascination and rotted under the iron roof.

2

Events

TIME PASSED. Winter came, and the roofs in the village were covered with snow. Christmas approached. There was an immense deal of work to be done. I had to roll shortbread the whole day beside Max, cut out the shapes, lay them on greased tins, and bake them. Whole baskets full of cinnamon stars, nut fingers, and marzipan stood ready by the evening. At ten o'clock I could go to bed; at twelve o'clock the journeyman waked me for the night's work. My head was heavy, and I was more asleep than awake as I plunged my naked arms into the dough and kneaded it. If I dropped off, I was jogged and beaten. And that went on night after night. At six in the morning I tramped with my loaded bread-basket through the snowy darkness and delivered bread in the distant villages. About midday I came home wet through. I had some food, changed my clothes, and was then required to help Max make confections for Christmas trees. And so the weeks slipped by. One night I fell asleep and slid into the dough. The journeyman set upon me and beat me with his bony fists. I snatched my arms out of the dough and ran howling to Max to make a complaint. He, startled out of his sleep, sprang out of bed and hit at me blindly, so that I rushed downstairs again in terror and went on working and crying.

"Ah! he'll give you what for!" scoffed the journeyman, and cuffed me on the slightest pretext, so that I went on kneading blindly and sullenly, like a dumb brute. I can't go on like this, I thought each night, and beat my brains for a way of escape.

On Christmas day itself work stopped. The journeyman went into the city. There was punch in the parlour, and each of us

received a little present. And one could sleep the whole night through.

At last, after the New Year, the Christmas festivities came to an end. There was rather less cake-making to do, and less work by day. I had to go every afternoon into the forest to cut wood with Max. Everywhere the snow lay thick on the ground and the branches. Max spoke very little, but he climbed the trees and sawed off thick boughs. When all the snow fell upon me as he shook the tree, he was greatly amused. He sometimes laughed a little when I shook myself and shivered.

At the end of February Maurus came home from Bamberg. He took over what little cake-making there was, and I had to help him. For some reason or other Max avoided him. They hardly spoke to each other.

In this way it came about that I worked under a new master by day. At first we got on well together. Maurus talked to me about his books again, and about foreign parts, and sometimes even condescended to play the fool with me. I grew more attached to him.

If Max was out, we worked quicker, got through everything rapidly, and then sat on the bench in the bakery, and Maurus began to read *Henry IV* to me. But I had difficulty in understanding the lines, though he often explained the jokes fairly fully and bluntly, and gave me encouragement now and then. To escape a beating I often laughed loudly, which gave him great pleasure.

There was now very little night-work. The other journeyman, a surly fellow, left us. He had stolen too much bread. An old, grey-haired man had come from the city, and was usually drunk. But he was a good baker, and as he very seldom struck me, I worked well with him. He gave me a new name every day, and played all manner of tricks on me. When he was tipsy he sang old songs from his reservist days. He often lay in the chimney-corner and bawled, as though he were encouraging a horse: "Whoa, whoa — gently, Vogel, gently!" Then I helped him up, and he kissed me so that his smutty face left a mark on my cheeks, and stood unsteadily and called out in a loud, hoarse voice: "Here I stand! — Major Vogel! General

Vogel. Of the High Order of Knighthood! Decorated with the Order of Max the Ox! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" The house re-echoed. He embraced me affectionately and thanked me for being so kind to him.

"Little Oskar" or "Little Siegfried" or "Little Aloysius," he always said. "I will never forget you! You are a good fellow!" And I was touched. I worked like a nigger and did all that I could for Vogel. Those were happy nights. During meal-times the journeyman snored away on the bench, and I read stories about Indians and books of travel, and woke him when it was time to start work. Towards four o'clock, when my mother came, we had generally finished. The maid came down and attended to her work in the stables. We had coffee, and at six o'clock I had to set out on my bread-rounds with Anna.

This comradeship on the open highway was the happiest time for us. On the homeward road we invented stories and told them to each other; we ourselves were the principal characters, and we lived on a giant ship in the Pacific, surrounded by fabulous wealth and luxury beyond conception. Sometimes the stories took a dramatic turn. There were fights with hostile pirates, whom we promptly subdued and punished with extraordinary cruelty. If there were anyone in the village whom we hated, he was brought into the story and somehow or other taken prisoner. Then followed a terrible vengeance.

On bright Sunday afternoons Maurus and I went off on our bicycles and found a quiet, sunny place in the forest, where he read aloud to me. I grew more and more familiar with Ibsen's plays, Kleist's stories, and especially Shakespeare, whom we read again and again. Then there were the Russians — mainly Tolstoy — and Heine and Lessing. Maurus read with feeling, and revived my enthusiasm, our bookish rivalry, and the triumph of each when he knew something that the other had not read. I now persuaded Anna to read books, and our bread-rounds lasted longer and longer. Then Max would often beat us.

One day when we came home Maurus and Max were quarrelling.

We did not know what it was about. They shouted louder and louder, and at last it came to blows. There was a terrible fight, and Max would not let go till Maurus was leaning against the wall, covered with blood. Then Max went upstairs and put on his best clothes, for it was Tuesday and he had to go to the choir practice. Nevertheless, neither had beaten the other. Anna and I went up to Maurus, looked at him meaningly, and clenched our fists: "He shall pay for that, the brute!"

Maurus sobbed with rage; then he checked himself, and washed at the spring. That same evening he went to the city, and for a long time we had no news of him. Max was now sole master once more; he knew how to get rid of any troublesome brother or sister. Eugene went to America at the end of his term of military service, and my sister Theresa followed Emma's example. She too learned dress-making in the city.

The household was changed. Besides Mother, Anna, and myself, there was a maid, Vogel the journeyman, and Max whose orders were obeyed almost without our thinking.

And Fate overtook even General Vogel one day. He went into the city and got so drunk that he fell asleep in the train and travelled on as far as Tutzing. There he hired a trap late at night, and arrived at our house at two o'clock in the morning. He was not in a condition to work, and I could not get through everything alone. There he lay, snoring. Every now and then he made a coughing noise. I had to wake Max, and we two baked the bread. The next day Vogel was dismissed. He cried like a child, for he liked being with us. But things could not go on like that. A new journeyman was engaged. He beat me more than any of his predecessors. I had no one to help me, no one to whom I could speak of my nightly torment. Max must not be allowed to know anything about it, Mother always cried softly and helplessly in reply to my wailing, and Anna could do nothing to help. There was only one person in the whole house who sometimes understood me: Leni, the maid. And though I hardly noticed her sympathy, nevertheless I was conscious of it.

One morning I was leaning with a blood-stained head against the

kitchen dresser and crying quietly to myself. Mother just said: "If only we could have peace once in a way," and went into the shop. That upset me more than ever. Leni came in and was going to the fire-place when she saw me.

"What is the matter, Oskar? You are bleeding?" she asked as she came up to me.

"He has beaten me silly," I said. Leni went to the fire-place shaking her head.

"The brute!" she said, with her back towards me. It was only a word. But there was something in her voice that I had never known before, something homely and comforting. When she was going out of the kitchen again she stopped beside me and said in the same tone: "With us it was Father," and then disappeared.

I went to the spring and washed myself. Her last brief words had revealed to me the whole life of someone else who had suffered like me and understood. It was as if someone came to me out of the darkness and silence and said: "Look, I suffered the same!" I felt within me a spring of happiness and unspeakable comfort.

Every day when I came home from my bread-rounds I had to cut chaff with Leni. She fed the machine and I turned the fly-wheel. Every day as we stood alone on the threshing-floor, and talked together, and told each other our experiences in words tinged with sentiment, we were happy. Each looked into the other's eyes and then dropped them, without knowing why. Once — I don't know how it came about — I flung myself helplessly on Leni's breast and embraced her, moaning again and again: "Leni! Leni!" and kissed her passionately. She was horrified and resisted earnestly, but she was not angry. I saw her flushed face, and her bosom rose and fell. I should have liked to hide myself altogether in her arms, but she pushed me away and said: "Oskar? Why, Oskar? — What is the matter? — What has come over you?" I let her go, pulled myself together rapidly, and stood there panting, ashamed and confused. She stroked my forehead and spoke with motherly gentleness: "You mustn't do that." For the moment I did not know what to do and all of a sudden I jumped up and seized the handle of the chaff-

cutting machine and turned the fly-wheel faster than ever. When we had finished I ran hastily down into the bakery without looking again at Leni. At dinner when we sat opposite each other at table we dropped our eyes, and afterwards I slipped out quickly. Nothing further arose between us. We remained good friends to the last, and though Leni was a woman of thirty, industrious, sensible, and very pious too, nevertheless she knew of all my pranks and helped me out of tight places when there was a threat of trouble from Max. Often after I had been allowed to go to bed I looked secretly out of the window for hours, because Leni was busy at the wash-tub below. That was the beginning and end of my love.

3

Flight

M AURUS HAD GONE. He had left his books behind. I read till my mind was saturated with them. Then he sent for them, and that ecstasy was lost to me. Anna, too, or "Nanny," as we called her, read everything that I gave her. We came to yearn for that world of fantasy. But what could we do?

We saw an advertisement of Bong's Classics in the paper. There was a picture of the books, and they looked very impressive. We thought it over. After a few bread-rounds our resolution was made. We raked money together, Nanny her tips and I my weekly wages. Then we ordered — through our shoemaker once more — Schiller's works, then Lessing, Petöfi, Mörike, Lenau, and Grabbe.

The edition was bound in red with a gilt back. That attracted us. We feared, however, that Max would discover our secret, so for the time being we left the books at the shoemaker's. But there the little children smudged them. We beat our brains to know what else to do, and were wretched about it.

I thought of Leni. But Nanny knew no more than anyone else in the house of the tie between us, and she opposed the idea.

My vein of inventiveness was stirred. What if we managed to make my cupboard, which stood in the journeyman's room, accessible to us two alone?

The idea gave me no rest. I must put it into effect. The only difficulty was that the job must be done when no one was there to see.

On Sunday afternoons the journeyman was usually out. And Max had to visit various customers who kept inns, and hand them their

accounts. Mother generally sat and knitted in the summer-house, and Leni went to church.

We set to work. We made an accurate drawing of the cupboard door, cut out the shelf and split it down the middle, so that between the door and the shelf there was a fairly wide empty space — nearly half the depth of the cupboard. We then applied all our skill to the making of a new door for the inside, put a lock on it, and fixed it in its place. Afterwards we made a shelf for show, exactly like the original, and nailed it to the sham door, so that when the original door was opened everything inside looked the same as usual, in spite of the hidden space behind. In the front part, left for show, we put everything back as it had been before; but in the back we stowed our books, arranging them in a neat row. There stood the mysterious cupboard, just as before. The key was in the lock, as it had always been; the door could be opened and there was nothing to be seen but uninteresting clothes, with collars on the shelf, and several ties, and my hat.

The work had occupied three Sunday afternoons — hours of danger and excitement. We danced with pride and triumph when we saw how admirably it worked. Then we slipped round to the shoemaker's and fetched our classics one after another, and arranged them in a row on our secret shelf with their gleaming golden backs turned outwards.

Hitherto we had usually looked glum when we were sent on an extra, unexpected bread-round, but now we were willing and even pleased. One of us ran quickly upstairs, fetched a book down stealthily, and hid it under his clothes; and then we hurried away. We did not begin to read till we were beyond the village and there was not a soul in sight. As a rule we read aloud, if it was poetry. If it was prose, we separated and agreed on a place where we would meet again. It was quite immaterial whether we understood what we read. What mattered was that we had read it and were familiar with it all. It was mass that counted.

We were in raptures. The sound of the words intoxicated us. In the end I knew quantities of poetry by heart. Schiller's "Song of

the Bell" just flowed from my lips. And one day I read the first of my own poems to Nanny. Of course I recited it with so much feeling that all other poems seemed pitiable in comparison, and of course that had its effect on Nanny. She praised it warmly. I compared it with Uhland and Schiller, and thought it quite as beautiful.

Autumn came. We had to mind the cows out at pasture. The days were bright and warm, the sky above us was all a-dream. We lay on our backs and gazed into the depths. We were content. I composed ballads in those days, and Anna was always transported by them. I read eagerly about the varied careers of poets, and pictured my own future accordingly. As a rule, when I had finished a poem I introduced it with a romantic tale about a poet, and did not fail to draw comparisons. In so doing, I believe the characters took clearer form in my mind than if anyone else had described them. My stories sounded as if I had known Grabbe, Schiller, and all the other famous men, in person. Some day, I thought, I shall make my way up out of my obscurity, and shall astonish the whole world.

After a time it became known at home that I wrote poetry. Emma was at home again, and I read something to her. She was always a patient listener, and the most cheerful of the family. She laughed at me, it is true, but she liked the poem. One Sunday, when I could contain myself no longer and read a verse to Leni with tremendous pathos, she said: "You will be another Goethe yet." Only Max must know nothing of it. My mother was not interested; she read nothing but her prayer-book and the church notices in the *Starnberg Messenger*.

Our library increased, and with it the danger of discovery. But we were seized with a fanatical passion for book-buying. Often we forgot all precautions; then again we suffered hours of tormenting fear of Max.

"If I succeed this time, I shall have to go away, or Max will kill me," I often said to Nanny.

She nodded in perplexity and said mechanically: "Yes, you're right."

But we did not think out the future. In spite of all our precautions we were never free from our everlasting fear, and at every slight indication of danger I lost sleep. I turned the matter over and over in my mind, and so did Nanny.

Mother had once told me that when she was a young girl she prayed the Virgin Mary to fulfil a particular wish of hers within a certain time. But she went on thinking about her wish, and so it was not fulfilled. But her sister, Mary, she said, had a momentary fancy and never thought about it again, and her wish was fulfilled.

That gave us a hint. We thought of the danger perpetually and hoped by so doing to charm it away successfully.

"Oskar," announced Nanny one day excitedly in the wood-shed, "the postman has been asking the shoemaker why he is always having things sent to be paid for on delivery, and what is in the parcels ——."

The postman! Our worst enemy! Known far and wide as a vain, gossiping tale-bearer! A man to whom we never wished good-day, because his face reminded us of Max.

The postman! On account of his impressive exterior and his smart, soldierly bearing, all the girls that wanted to get married fluttered round him, and he, knowing it, played the great man everywhere, had his finger in every pie, and was, so to speak, the walking censor of the season. This chit of a discharged officer, whom in our earlier imaginary stories we had taken prisoner, hanged, shot, broken on the wheel, and quartered a hundred times?! *He* had said that? *He* was still alive?!

I ran to the shoemaker's.

"What did the postman say?"

The old man wanted to evade me. I pressed him. At last he admitted: "The spy! He asked me why I was always sending for things. I was struck dumb and said I didn't know what was in the parcels ——"

Now I saw trouble ahead. I ran home again and told Nanny. I thought it over: one way or another it must come out. I must get away! Away!

Flight, then — but how?

I turned it over and over in my mind.

As I have already said, we had a large grocery in addition to the bakery business; we sold spirits, braces, peas and beans, ribbons, chocolate, cigars, cigarettes, etc. In the shop were all manner of things that would be useful if I ran away.

I went to the lumber-room and looked for Eugene's reservist's portmanteau, put it in the hayloft, and packed it gradually. I stole several pieces of soap from the shop, two bottles of methylated spirit, candles, quantities of soup squares, tea, a pound of salt, a packet of sugar, studs, writing-paper, pens, and ink. One side of the portmanteau was full. Then I fetched my shirts and got an old spirit-lamp from the kitchen dresser, matches, and a few towels; two tins of cocoa vanished under my hands, and I packed the whole lot together with my shoes and some other clothes in the second half, shut the portmanteau, and covered it with hay.

My mind was easier now. At any rate I was prepared for flight.

Yes — but, you silly fool, I thought as I crept downstairs, you need money more than anything else if you are going to run away! Money! And once more I was seized with desperate fear.

Where could I get money?

My thoughts were in a whirl, when suddenly I remembered the savings-bank, and my book which my mother had last shown me on my birthday. I had already three hundred marks.

With such a sum at my disposal, I am lord of the whole world, I thought. I crept immediately to my mother's room and poked about. There was nothing to be found. The coveted treasure was neither in the wardrobe nor the chest of drawers.

But the cupboard on the wall with the Madonna above it was locked. That amounted to a silent assurance. The savings-books must be shut away there.

Where was the key? I hunted everywhere, but found nothing. In despair I crept back to bed and waited till Mother came upstairs. Luckily the journeyman was at the public-house. No sooner had Mother shut her bedroom door than I went and stood at the key-

hole. It was as I expected. She said her evening prayers, went to the wall, raised the Madonna a little on one side, and drew out a small key. Then she opened the cupboard. I knew everything and was satisfied. I went back to bed with an easy mind. And it was time, too. The journeyman was mounting the stairs, coughing a little as he came.

Next day I secured the savings-book. Nothing came of it. The days passed, one after another. My nerves were on edge. I slept badly. I plunged into my books again, but I could not fix my attention. Any day, any hour, might bring the catastrophe. Nothing happened.

It must have been about three in the afternoon. I had finished tidying the bakery and was sitting on the bench and dropping gradually off to sleep. Suddenly the door opened and Max stood before me with a threatening mien, and seized hold of me.

All I heard was: "You —— !" and something about the postman, and payment on delivery, and the shoemaker. Then his iron blows rained down on me. Max dragged me up to the cupboard, turned out my pockets, opened first the cupboard and then the secret door, and hurled the books out. He never stopped beating me meanwhile. Blood was flowing from my head. I clenched my teeth and shut my eyes. I sweated and then turned ice-cold, and still the blows rained down. Suddenly I fell to the ground and lay stretched out. When I came to myself and looked round, all was quiet. It was a quarter past four by the clock. I got up, carefully put my clothes to rights, crept down into the stable, let the cold water run over my throbbing head, and washed till I felt refreshed. Back in the journeyman's room I put on my Sunday clothes, drew my savings-book out from under the mattress of the journeyman's bed, and set out for Aufkirchen, for the savings-bank was there. I had made up my mind: I would run away.

But first I must get the money. All the way I racked my brains how I should speak to the cashier so as to make matters appear natural and innocent. It was striking five already. I hastened my steps. At six she might be gone. Perhaps she had already closed the

bank and gone for a walk. Again I was seized with terror. I raced along and ran panting up the hill. From the top there was a wide view over the fields. It was a bright day in the late autumn. There were manure wagons standing in the midst of the stubble. Ploughs wound over the brown fields, drawn by slowly moving oxen. All around was peaceful stillness.

What if she won't give me the money? The thought darted suddenly through my brain. I was already meditating whether I should not sleep in the forest and set out the next day. Nevertheless, I walked on more resolutely than ever.

I really did find the cashier still at the savings-bank. She looked at me through her spectacles with her aged, watery eyes, asked what I wanted, and sneezed. This cashier was an old maid of sixty with the airs of a kindly school-master's wife. I played the part of a well-behaved, shy schoolboy, and said, politely: "Good-day, Miss Waschmitzius. Mother sends her kind regards, and I am to fetch the money to get a new suit."

Miss Waschmitzius looked at me somewhat suspiciously, but because I gazed at her so very innocently, her wrinkled face brightened.

"Well, well — Oh, yes — You come from Graf's, the baker's. You are Oskar? — Oh, yes, but you must sign for it," she said, and her eyes questioned me.

"Oh, yes," I said still more hypocritically, "I know, Mother told me — nobody else had time to come — I am old enough to sign."

She minced across the room to the safe with the book that I handed to her, counted out the money, and I signed.

"Count it again," she said.

I did so. Three hundred marks. Ten twenty-mark notes and a bank note for a hundred marks.

"Yes, that's exactly right, Miss Waschmitzius," I repeated very politely, and I even tried to smile. Then I put the money in my pocket, said, "Thank you," and went away. Out in the road I was overwhelmed with triumphant joy. I hurried out of the village and suddenly began to laugh out loud. A glow of warmth ran through my veins, upwards and down again. I was already looking forward

to the railway journey, for now everything was settled and I was fully resolved.

When I got home I crept to my room through the barn and listened for a time. Nobody made a sound. I had brought down my portmanteau from the hayloft, and when I was ready I came downstairs quite noisily, for I knew that Max was driving a cart of manure out to the field. Mother came out of the kitchen. She stood stock still and looked at me helplessly: "What are you about?"

"I am going away," I shouted at her, and once more I was on the verge of tears. I slipped hastily out of the back door. There was a lump in my throat and I could hardly breathe.

Leni was loading the cart with manure. When I passed her she looked at me dumbly. I wanted to speak, but I was ashamed of myself and looked in the other direction, and then I ran on quickly.

I went down into the Etz Valley to the landing-place where the steamers stopped. On the road I met Nanny. She said: "Are you off now?"

I only nodded and looked at her sorrowfully. She stood and waved to me for a long time. I had told her hurriedly to send the books after me secretly, and sometimes to send me things to eat. I would write to her under cover to the shoemaker.

It was not till I had seen the last of them that I felt more light-hearted. It seemed as though I realized at last that now I had only myself to rely upon.

I gazed once more across the meadow at the bottom of the valley where the horses grazed, and everything came back to me, how we shot and played at Red Indians, our destructive pranks, and how we chased the horses; and my heart grew tender and sad. But these thoughts were interwoven with others concerning the city and the future. It was all a confused tangle. I gulped down my tears resolutely and went firmly on my way.

4

In the City

I^N THE TRAIN, surrounded by strangers, I did my best to look important. I was very uncomfortable. Hitherto I had only been in the city three times: once with my father as a boy of seven; once with my godfather; and once with my brother Lenz for the October fair.

It was the question of lodgings that troubled me at the moment. During my last days at home I had searched the papers continually for advertisements of furnished rooms. And now, in the train I sat immersed in the paper looking carefully under the heading: "Rooms to Let." I went back to the beginning again and again, partly from nervousness, partly anxiety. But when I thought of my money and of all the treasures I had taken with me, I grew more comfortable. I pictured to myself a pleasant life as a poet. Something like this: a room with a sofa — nice and warm. I do my own cooking and write poetry. Very soon my books begin to appear. My home people hear about me; they are amazed and come to visit their distinguished son.

Three hundred marks! That seemed to me an inexhaustible sum. One could live on it for years.

The trees rushed past. The fields spun by. The evening mist rose from the valleys. The train roared.

At the station I alighted, went up to a man with a red cap, and asked where I could get someone to carry my luggage.

"I can do that for you," he said, and felt the weight.

I looked at the paper and said: "Take me to 59 Augusta Street, the second floor."

"Have you taken the room?" asked the man.

"No, I haven't, but there it is," I said with hesitation, and looked at the man, who now took my portmanteau. "Look, the room is available at any time —"

The man smiled. Obviously he saw that I had come up from the country. I was wholly disarmed. I said helplessly: "What shall I do, then?"

The man took my arm good-naturedly, picked up my portmanteau, and said cheerily: "Look here — just put your portmanteau in the cloakroom, and then go into the town and have a look round. Wherever you see a placard saying: "Room to Let," go in and ask if you can have it. When you have found a room, come back and tell me. Then I will carry your luggage — That's it — Here is the ticket — don't lose it. Good-bye."

I gazed at him in dumb admiration, gave him a tip of five marks, and went into the town.

I was dreadfully uneasy. For the first time in my life I learned something of what it means not to have a roof over one's head. A miserable, restless feeling sent me hurrying along the streets and alleys. I looked greedily for a placard announcing rooms to let. In Zweig Street I saw one. I read it hurriedly, ran up the steps, and rang the bell. There was an enamel plate with the words "Crown Prince Private Hotel." A little waiter in a dress-coat opened the door, surveyed me critically, and asked what I wanted.

"Have you rooms to let, please? I want one," I said with embarrassment.

"Yes, please come in," said the waiter, and motioned to me to follow him. We passed through a long corridor to the back of the house, up several flights, then along a dark, narrow passage, and at last the man opened a door and stepped into the middle of a rather bare, cold room.

"This would do for you — it is plain and not too expensive," he said.

"What is the price?" I asked, and felt for my purse.

"Thirty marks a month," he answered.

"Very well, I will take it," I said without stopping to think, and gave him a hundred-mark bank-note.

"How long do you want the room, sir," asked the waiter formally, taking the note; he drew a writing-pad from his breast-pocket and wrote something down.

"Well — for three months — but I don't know exactly ——" I stammered in confusion.

"Ah! — Then you will be staying for some time?"

"Yes, take the rent for three months at once," I said, and breathed a sigh of relief.

"Just as you wish," said the waiter attentively, and stared at me so strangely that I lost my self-assurance.

"You will light the stove? — And my portmanteau is still at the station," I said dully.

"Oh yes, we will send for it — the house-porter will see to that," said the waiter in a conciliatory voice; then he continued in more homely tones: "We will light the stove, if you like. That costs one mark, and then — what was I going to say? — of course you give the chambermaid a small tip every month for doing your room, and me for serving your meals — just as it suits you, sir ——" He glanced at me sideways and made a knowing face. He smiled a servile smile.

"What does all that cost?" I asked and took my money out again. "I will give it to you now and you can settle everything with the others."

This again struck the seemingly experienced waiter so forcibly that he began to speak at once.

"Dear me, one always gives three or four marks to each," he resumed without hesitation, smiling civilly, and he was about to give me ten marks change from the hundred-mark note.

"I see. Then here are twenty marks more, and now I have paid for everything for three months," I said, and gave him back the ten-mark piece and a twenty-mark note as well. The man made an elegant bow and thanked me coolly, and then said in a business like manner: "I will tell the house-porter to fetch your portmanteau at

once. May I have the ticket? — And then — of course one gives little tips every now and then for one thing and another."

"Oh, yes. Thank you," I said, and added: "When he brings me the portmanteau I will give him something."

The waiter said: "Yes, sir," bowed again, and left me alone. I sat down on a chair without taking off my coat, and let my thoughts wander.

After a while there was a knock at the door. The house-porter brought my portmanteau, took off his cap and stood there, as though he were waiting for something. I gave him five marks. He thanked me with marked attention and left the room. While I was unpacking there was another knock. The chambermaid came in smiling, gave me a printed form to fill in for the police, put pen and ink beside it, and said in a mincing voice: "Will you kindly fill that in?" Then she tiptoed out of the room again. I hung up my clothes in the wardrobe, put the soup squares in the table drawer, stood the spirit-lamp on the stove and the bottles against the wall, laid my few shirts in the chest-of-drawers, and arranged things to look a little homelike.

There was another knock. I said: "Come in," and the waiter appeared and asked, smiling: "Will you have supper here, sir, or are you going out?" He was about to hand me the menu.

I said: "No."

He said: "Very well," and shut the door again.

I walked restlessly to and fro. It grew dark. I turned on the electric light, undressed, and got into bed. For a long time I lay there without thinking of anything, and at last I fell asleep.

Next morning there was a knock very early, I think, and when I woke with a start and asked what it was, the chambermaid said: "Will you have breakfast in your room, sir?"

"Y-yes," I replied, heavy with sleep, "but I am still in bed — A little later on."

"Then will you ring?" said the girl, and I heard her steps die away down the corridor. I fell asleep again and woke up when the sun was high in the sky. The noises of the city produced a strange

atmosphere in the room. I jumped quickly out of bed, washed, and dressed. I wanted to get out into the streets as quickly as possible. This place repelled me with its unfamiliarity. I did not know what to do. I rang the bell. Breakfast came. I swallowed my food in hurried excitement and went out.

The streets were thick with people. My first expedition was to the shops. I poked around among the books, and when the attendant came I ordered a quantity, said she was to send them to the Crown Prince Hotel, and went on my way.

At the corner of Augusta Street I entered a café and sat down awkwardly. The waitress came, set a cup before me, and asked: "Coffee, sir?" I nodded. She poured it out and asked again: "Cake?"

I said: "Yes," stirred my coffee, drank it, and ate the cake. Then I considered. What should I do next? I could not go away so soon. In the country, innkeepers usually look annoyed if a customer sits on after drinking a single glass of beer.

So I ordered coffee again. With cake. Of course. I kept on looking at the customers at neighbouring tables so as to see how to behave. They sat at the tables, reading or playing cards.

Queer, I thought, queer, what a lot of coffee people drink! They sit there the whole afternoon and swallow cup after cup. And I emptied mine and ordered another. The waitress was beginning to look amused. But what was I to do? I couldn't sit there for hours after having a single cup of coffee! And I ordered coffee and cake again, and again, and again, and ate what was set before me with grim solemnity. The waitress was laughing by now. I said in a loud voice: "My bill!"

"Five cups of coffee and five cakes—that is one mark fifty and one mark seventy-five, that makes three marks twenty-five," the waitress reckoned with a suppressed smile. I beat a hasty retreat. Outside I had an idea. I walked to and fro in front of the café and looked in sideways at the window. Then I suddenly saw a girl setting glasses of water on the table. I returned to my hotel satisfied. Ah, I thought, then one can drink water.

The next day I came back and ordered water.

"We only serve water with coffee," was the answer. I blushed to the roots of my hair, ordered coffee, and went out as soon as I had finished it. After this it was a long time before I entered a café again, and it was not till much later that I found out how these things are done.

But I had one great triumph at this time. I was scarcely settled comfortably in the city before I had visiting cards printed with the words: "Oskar Graf, Author, Munich."

That amounted, in my mind, to a certificate, and a step forwards, in my new life. What I desired to be, I was. There it stood in black and white, ineradicable, unalterable.

I went back to the hotel and stuck my card on the door in a prominent place. I gave one to the waiter directly and said in the jovial and confiding manner of an honest fellow: "That's that."

5

Work

MY MONEY MELTED AWAY with alarming rapidity. It shrank and shrank. And that, although I scarcely ever went to a tavern for my midday meal—not for reasons of economy, but because of the miserable affair at the café; although I made soup on the spirit lamp with my soup squares nearly every day, and ate bread with cocoa or tea. It was unbelievable. At the end of two weeks only about eighty marks were left. But whenever I became really anxious about the future, I remembered that I had paid for three months' lodging. For three months, therefore, I should not need a farthing; only soup squares, bread, and methylated spirit.

I did not write home. Only to Nanny I had written twice under cover to the shoemaker. In the second letter I enclosed a visiting card. That, as my first appearance in print, must impress her. And so it did, as her first letter showed. Moreover, she promised to send me money and food secretly. That was something to look forward to. I bought Schopenhauer's *Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life*, sat every evening at my table, and read them aloud to myself. I read with such eagerness and such stubborn determination that I soon knew the whole by heart. At the same time I was writing two plays. The first was called *The Fear of Others* and the second *The Ruins of Society*. The fear of others was the idea of honour in present-day life, and the ruin of society was suspicion. Meanwhile, I was beginning to grow accustomed to life in the city.

"Can you type out a play, if I read it aloud?" I asked one day, entering a typewriting office in Sendlingertor Square.

"Yes, we charge one mark fifty an hour for dictation," said the lady with the high collar, and she led me into a small room. In a fortnight — at the rate of several hours a day — I was the happy possessor of the manuscripts of my first two plays. Then I set to work. I wrote twenty letters a day. I bought all the newspapers, journals, and Sunday sheets, and looked in books, for publishers' addresses.

I wrote: "Dear Sir, I have completed a play and am ready to let you have it for publication. It is a tragedy. I would accept a thousand marks. If you are not prepared to pay so much, we can discuss the matter. It ought to be published promptly and is sure to be accepted for the stage at once, for it is highly dramatic. Yours faithfully, Oskar Graf, Author, Crown Prince Hotel, Zweig Street, Munich."

I wrote more confidentially to the larger publishing houses, like Bong's, Cotta's, and Fischer's: "Dear Sir, A young man of talent appeals to you, in the utmost distress. I, the undersigned, have written a play that is likely to have a phenomenal success the moment it appears, and to sell widely. Please help me. I am living in extreme poverty and will let you have my work for any price you may care to offer. I hope I shall soon hear from you and receive payment. I will then send the manuscript at once. Thanking you in anticipation, I remain, Yours sincerely, Oskar Graf, Author, Crown Prince Hotel, Munich."

To others I wrote with a query: "Dear Sir or Sirs, Could you make use of a popular drama of contemporary life? Immediately on receiving your reply I can send you two plays, each in four acts. I will accept any offer, but the plays must be brought out promptly. I enclose stamps for a reply. Thanking you in anticipation, I remain, Yours Sincerely, Oskar Graf, etc."

There was a rain of rejections, printed, typed, and written. It was incredible. I sent the plays themselves, and got them back promptly or not at all, till I wrote and inquired for them. These letters of inquiry were usually rude: "Dear Sir, I had thought you were the only publishing house which read everything that was sent in, and

would help a young man of talent in distress. I hope that I shall hear from you to-morrow. There are other publishers waiting. I must ask you otherwise to return the manuscript. I am sorry, but I am compelled to write to that effect. Yours sincerely, Oskar etc."

Then the manuscript generally came back without a letter. I shook my head. It was no use. Oh, well, I thought, they can't have read the play. If they had, my name might already be printed on a theatre programme.

It was desperate. I looked in the bookshop windows. What were the new books? What was being favourably received? Comic tales by Georg Queri. Immediately I wrote a volume of Upper Bavarian comic tales and offered them to all manner of publishers. No one accepted, no one even asked to see the manuscript. One publisher, to whom I had sent it, wrote back: "Who ever would print and publish such stuff?" I returned to the task of recommending my plays.

My money came to an end. The deuce!

I wrote to Nanny. She sent twenty marks, and promised more. Thank God! I plunged into my work. More and more letters. And at night — Arthur Schopenhauer's *Aphorisms*.

No more money. Nanny sent five marks and wrote: "I can't send you any more. It's impossible. And don't send any more letters to the shoemaker. He won't have it."

What was I to do now?

I had no peace.

Night after night I read Schopenhauer from dusk to dawn. The lady in the next room, a Baroness, sent me a letter: "Dear Mr. Graf, As your neighbour I should like to make a request which I hope you will not resent. Much as I honour you for your studious diligence, I would beg you urgently and respectfully to read rather more quietly. Wishing you every success in your work, I remain, Yours very faithfully, Baroness So and So."

What was I to do? Curse it! Curse it! The old cat!

Again I sent out *The Fear of Others*. I enclosed a long, beseeching letter. I had even learnt meantime to send it registered. I waited.

Unexpectedly a letter came from this last publisher. He answered that he had read the play with great interest, and that it showed very considerable talent. He was prepared to publish it. It would cost four hundred and fifty marks. In return for this the book should appear promptly, well got up in an edition of one to two thousand. As a special favour I was to receive 25 per cent of the published price. I made my calculations. Here was victory. I spoke to the waiter with assurance the next day when he gave me a letter from another publisher: "Now they are coming along because I have disposed of my work! They always hesitate at first." He only looked at me and smiled maliciously. I turned away with an imposing gesture.

Ah, but where should I get the four hundred and fifty marks?

I wrote an enormously long letter to Nanny straightway, and at the same time to the shoemaker, begging him to do me this last favour. As soon as my play was out I would send him complimentary tickets and money, so that he could see it produced.

And Nanny wrote again: "I haven't no more money. I can't."

What was I to do? I had still four marks. I had hardly been six weeks from home. I was on the verge of despair and at the height of ecstasy. I read the publisher's letter over and over again. Then the agreement came, and an urgent letter asking me to give a definite answer. I wrote confidently: "Dear Sir, I was delighted beyond measure that you had discovered my talent. I will send the money as soon as I can. My sisters are going to send it to me, and they must draw it out of the savings-bank. I beg that you will allow me a little longer. I promise faithfully to send the money soon. Yours, in sincere confidence and gratitude, Oskar Graf, Author."

And now I had to take a decisive step.

At that time my eldest sister, Theresa, was also in the city learning the millinery trade. I had her address from Nanny. But I was ashamed to go to her, and had to arrange it so that we seemed to meet by chance, without any effort on my part. So in the evening I went secretly to the entrance of the shop where Theresa was apprenticed. She was bound to come out at seven o'clock. I stood some

little distance from the entrance and watched everyone that came out of the gate. To and fro I walked, tormented with anxiety.

At seven o'clock sharp Theresa came out with several of her companions. After a brief good-night she came along the path towards me without seeing me. I went to meet her as if I were in a great hurry. Suddenly she recognized me at a distance of about five paces. She stood still for a moment and said in alarm: "Oh, Oskar!" I held out my hand haughtily and tried to force myself to seem indifferent. And now she poured out her questions: "What are you doing? Have you got work? Where are you living? How are you?"

I evaded all her questions, put on a mysterious air, and only repeated: "I am writing."

"Oh — What are you writing?"

"I have written two plays."

She shook her head: "But are you earning anything?"

I said: "You will see in a month's time."

Her curiosity was roused: "What is it all about?"

"Well, a book of mine is to appear in a month."

"Are you getting enough money to live on?" asked Theresa urgently. She eyed me critically and continued: "And where do you live?"

"In Zweig Street, second story," I said curtly.

"What rent do you pay?" she pressed me further, looking more and more perturbed.

"Thirty marks a month," I answered drily.

"Where did you get the money? How do you live? Where do you get your meals?"

"I — as a rule I cook my own dinner." I stammered a little. She grew more and more disturbed. One shock after another was reflected in her face.

"Can I come and see you? I should like to come to-day," she begged.

We went to the hotel. Little by little I grew more depressed, and bit by bit the truth crept out. I told her about the publisher, and that I had no more money. I complained of Max and of everything

and said pathetically: "My talent must not be wasted! You don't know what a brother you have."

When we came to the door Theresa got a real fright and said "What! — You live in a hotel? — It's impossible! You can't pay for it! It must be frightfully dear."

"It is paid for already," I spoke drily and defiantly again.

"How is that?" she asked.

"Well, I have paid three months' rent," I replied in the same tone. Then we went up to my room. Theresa stood there absent-mindedly and repeated again and again: "Thirty marks! Thirty marks, my dear boy, my dear boy!"

Then I showed her the publisher's letter and besought her, until we both cried together and she promised that she and Emma would give me the money for the publisher. My spirits rose immediately and I said solemnly: "Some day, after I am dead, this will bring you silent fame."

I took her home. She gave me a little money, and four days later Emma knew everything at home and sent five hundred marks. With this I sent the publisher his fee at once, together with the signed agreement.

Every other day I wrote a letter of immense length to my "publisher" and already felt like a great poet.

Three weeks later some proofs arrived, together with a letter from the official receiver, announcing that the firm had gone bankrupt and asking me to state my claims. I was struck prostrate. I ran to Theresa and bemoaned my ill fortune. My complaint would have melted the hardest of hearts, but Theresa was adamant.

"You must get out of the hotel," she declared resolutely, and promised to find a room for me.

"You must look for some real work," was her second dictum.

"This scribbling poetry will be the death of you."

The next day, during the midday pause, she ran round to me and said firmly: "Come along, I have found a room for you."

We walked down Schiller Street. I moved a few days later to the second floor of the back block of number 16. Theresa had paid for

the room. It cost sixteen marks a month. We tried to get back the last half month's rent from the hotel, but met with a refusal. I hated this higgling, because it always seemed to me that the waiter might lose respect for me and cease to regard me as a rich gentleman and distinguished writer, and because I never worried, once the money was gone. Perhaps Theresa's efforts to get back the rent failed just because I did not give her the slightest support in her persistent demand.

The room in Schiller Street was rather dark, and full of imitation old German furniture. The landlady had a cunning face, like a lynx, and her eager attention made me suspicious of her from the first. It seemed to me, too, that Theresa must have discussed me with her beforehand, for I could not get rid of the impression that I had been placed here like a pupil under observation.

"There, that's all we can do for you, and now you must either find work or go back home," said my sister when we were alone in the room; she was on the verge of tears. Then she left me.

My spirit rose defiantly once more. I wrote urgently to Nanny begging her to help me. Several food parcels arrived, but no more money. I began to look round for work.

I saw in the paper: "Wanted, at once, a lift-man. Apply Röckenschuss, Block No. 2." I went to apply. It was a large cloth warehouse.

"What do you want?" said an older man, eyeing me critically.

"Please, sir, I saw in the paper that you want a lift-man," I said timidly.

The man smiled: "Yes — but" — and he looked at the visiting card that I handed him. "You are an author? — Do you now want to work a lift?"

I nodded awkwardly and said in a tone of entreaty: "Do take me on. I will do the work well."

After asking a number of questions — where I came from and what schools I had attended — the man told me to go along with the house-porter, who took me down a passage through several blocks and showed me where I was to work. It was a store with four

stories, in Marie Square. I made several journeys up and down, and the next day I began my duties. I got seven marks a week.

That same evening I went to see Theresa to tell her about it. She relented and promised to do all she could to help me. Actually I was deeply offended, but I put a good face on it. Some day I shall distinguish myself, I thought secretly, and then I will have revenge, revenge for all these humiliations and insults to my genius.

I was continually calculating how I might save money, but I did not get rich on my seven marks.

Theresa got Emma to spread the rumour at home that I had a good situation in a court bakery, lest Max should oppose my plans. They often sent me parcels of food by stealth.

It was February when I began my work on the lift. I had to stand all day from seven in the morning till six in the evening, with two hours free for dinner, in an open, paved corridor. It was bitterly cold that winter. Hardly six weeks had passed when I was seized with a severe attack of rheumatism, and one morning I was unable to get up. I just stayed in bed, without letting Theresa know, and told the landlady I was ill; would she make me a cup of tea? Theresa happened to come on the third evening. I was lying comfortably in bed and reading. "Why, what is the matter with you?" she asked.

"I have been in bed three days; I think it is rheumatism, I have pains all over," I said.

"Did you tell them at the shop that you were ill?" asked Theresa.

"No — I couldn't," I answered.

"If you are ill, you must go to the hospital — you'll get your death!" groaned my sister in her disappointment. "And besides, if you haven't told them at the shop, you will have lost your place."

"I am just ill!" I snarled in a rage, and went on angrily: "What have I to do with any of you! Leave me alone! I have no use for work that simply makes me ill! I will fend for myself in some other way."

Theresa sat silent for a time; suddenly she began to cry softly: "But, Oskar! — You can't go on like this — You must find proper

work or else go home again! You will be absolutely ruined! — It's only rich people that can afford to write poetry! — Oh, it's absurd!"

"What matter if I am ruined!" I growled angrily, and turned over. I was suddenly seized with unspeakable hatred of all my brothers and sisters, and I vowed never to communicate with them any more.

"Oh, Oskar! — Oskar!" Theresa sobbed suddenly, and shook me. "Do be sensible. Your luck will turn in time."

I turned round and held out my hand to her coldly. She broke down completely, and finally she left me.

In about a week I was able to get up. I began to read again, and wrote, and frittered away my days somehow or other. I was seized with unrest and disgust at myself. I was crushed with despair and my days were overcast with gloom.

Then I had a fresh idea. I invented jokes and sent them to the papers. That might bring in money, I thought. I still had a few marks, and Theresa had given me something before she left. There was still food. So I could get along.

Wherever I went and whatever I saw I wanted to exploit as a joke. I remembered my school-days. There was a boy who once made the following sentence from the word "hat": "The hat is too small because the head is too large." And another time he wrote an essay on the cock, and said: "The cock treads the hen, and grips her."

The moment I thought of a joke, I hurried to the typewriting office in the Sendlingertor Square and dictated to the lady with the high collar, had a letter typed at the same time, and sent both to the *Meggendorfer Blätter* or *Fliegende Blätter*. I was always clamorous in my demands: "Dear Sir, Here is a joke. Please accept it. It is a good one, and will be sure to make a great many readers laugh. I will let you have it for five marks. Yours faithfully, Oskar Graf, etc."

I went on sending without waiting for an answer. And I calculated the exact sum that I should ultimately receive.

One day I happened to meet Theresa.

"Have you found work?" she asked directly.

"Oho! I don't need work! I am earning enough now," I declared with assurance.

"How?" she asked.

"I am a contributor to the *Fliegende Blätter* and the *Megendorfer Blätter*. One will soon be sending me two hundred marks for forty jokes, and the other about a hundred and twenty marks." I told my story with something like condescension.

"But are you sure? Have they accepted your jokes?" she persisted, stubbornly resolved to get to the bottom of the matter.

"No, but I have sent them in, and now I must just wait," I replied calmly.

"As you like," she burst out at last. "I will never help you again! Do what you wish! Some day you will realize that you can't get on without proper work!" And she went on her way.

I could not understand how it was that anyone could fail to grasp so simple a fact as my contributing to the papers, and I shook my head in perplexity.

6

An Ugly Story

AT THAT TIME something happened which pursued me with remorse for more than ten years, though I passed over it lightly, as I did over all the guilt and folly and stupidity in my subsequent life.

I suddenly got a letter about that time from my brother Maurus, in Cassel, which roused me to the highest pitch of excitement. "Dear Oskar" — he wrote something to this effect — "I am coming to Munich and am going to look for work, and I am already looking forward to seeing you." He wrote abusively of things at home, but "now we two will help each other and save. Then we will travel and buy books. It will be fine." This was my brother's proposal. But I was not at all pleased at the news; on the contrary, I was horrified. Now it will all come out, I thought mistrustfully. He will find out everything, and will write home and tell them how I am living, and Max will come and give me an awful beating and take me home and keep me under control.

I read the letter again and again. It was honestly affectionate and sincere. But I did not believe a word. I looked for nothing but evil from his coming. A dog that has been beaten mistrusts even the most well-intentioned person who offers to pat him.

"Perhaps we can live together, and I may get work at your place," wrote Maurus further on. Good Lord! Good Lord! What was I to do.

I wanted to go straight to Theresa, but refrained. No, I won't, I persuaded myself in my obstinate stupidity, she will only come with her talk of getting work, and Maurus will do just the same.

"You must find work, you positively must! Or else you must simply go home!" He will say the same.

I racked my brains. All at once I went to my hated landlady and told her a regular romance of misfortune and entanglement. "You see, Mrs. Ulitsch, I am studying secretly! — It is only my sisters who help me. If it comes out, I shall have to pack off home, talents and all. My eldest brother is a brute — so are all my brothers. And now one of them is coming from Cassel — He has no work and no money, and he wants to live with me ——"

Mrs. Ulitsch understood the position directly. Her face hardened at once and she said in her eager, falsetto voice: "No, no, Mr. Graf, I can't have that! — It won't do — No, you yourself are such a nice, quiet gentleman — But your brother can't come to you for the night ——"

"Well, of course, I don't want him to come either but, you see ——" I was literally struggling for breath and felt the sweat run down from my armpits. "But — do help me! See here, Mrs. Ulitsch, we will help each other — I — I will show you gratitude — I will pay more ——"

I was utterly confused. Mrs. Ulitsch peered at me hastily and declared that she would never ask a lodger to pay more. No, indeed she wouldn't, but gentlemen had liked her rooms and had given something every year of their own free will.

"A nice gentleman knows himself what is proper when it comes to that, Mr. Graf — And I like you, I am sure I do my duty as a landlady. Don't I?" she piped.

"Yes — I realized that as soon as I got here," I lied valiantly, and already I was calculating secretly what she would ask. Finally we came to an understanding. I told her everything and she took my part. "Four little marks extra, Mr. Graf — surely that is not exorbitant," she said, and I agreed to everything. Only to have an ally, I thought, only somebody who will help me tell lies. And after this consultation I felt somewhat relieved.

Two days later Maurus came. I received him with well-feigned pleasure. He was merely struck with my fear of my landlady. I

listened to his stories. He was so affectionate. I hesitated again and again whether to tell him everything, but I always suppressed the impulse and cursed my landlady furiously. She was odious, disgusting, she didn't like my having visitors, I had to keep a sharp look-out on everything in the room; altogether it was most disagreeable living here.

My brother had arrived in the early morning. We sat together in my room till midday. I was on hot coals, he unsuspecting and gay. He unfolded his plans.

"You will save, and I shall find work and save; we will share our money, and our fortunes are made," was his constant refrain.

Out in the passage Mrs. Ulitsch was shuffling backwards and forwards all the time. Every now and then Maurus observed how nervous and distraught I was. At last we went out for dinner.

"I can sleep at your room to-night, can't I? You will be going to work anyway," my brother asked.

"Well," I said puckering my brows, "I don't know whether she won't make a row — You'll see, she won't like it if you stay with me, but I don't care a bit — We are together now — And to-morrow you will find yourself a room for the time being — If we can manage it, we will join and live together."

I got up hastily, went out to the landlady, and drew her into the kitchen. I told her all about it.

"And — and, please, please, Mrs. Ulitsch, can you give me two or three marks — perhaps five — I must pay for his dinner — my sister will come this way to-morrow and pay for everything," I besought vehemently. She gave the money with some reluctance.

"You can stay with me — Thank God! — Oh, I say, what a swine she is!" I said, returning to Maurus.

"You won't stay here long!" he said as we went out. He asked what my weekly wages were, what hours I worked at night, and if I had any success with my poetry.

"Really — twenty-two marks a week!" he said respectfully. "That's fine — And Sunday off? — Good Lord, you're in luck!"

He smiled and said cheerily: "Well, in that case you'll treat me to dinner to-day?"

"Yes, yes, of course — I haven't been able to save yet, but in a year I shall have a nice little nest-egg," I answered casually.

He smiled derisively and said: "Well, if you pay I shall get a cheap dinner to-day."

After dinner we went for a walk. He mocked at my poetry and began to laugh heartily again. He was in the best of spirits and talked incessantly. In the evening we returned to my room at last and I went to bed till eight o'clock. He sat down and read Heine meanwhile. At the appointed time I got up and pretended that I must hurry off to work. He wanted to accompany me; I tried to dissuade him, but he was not to be moved. So we went to Seidl's, the court confectioner's in Mars Street. All the way I was fuming with suspicion and fear, and beating my brains for a means of keeping up the deception. There was a little garden in front of the shop, and there we took leave. I hurried into the corridor and waited there a full half hour. When anybody passed I lighted a cigarette and tidied my clothes. At last I slipped cautiously out of the gate, peering in all directions, and walked towards Schwabing. I sat down in a café till closing-time, and then tramped the streets again. In the station I cowered on a bench, but a policeman drove me off; I passed some time in the waiting-room, then I walked about the town again. I was shivering and utterly wretched. I cursed myself out loud and loathed my deceit. I went to the English Garden and walked up and down along the deserted paths and heard every hour strike. To pass the time I recited a poem every now and then, and finally began to make rhymes myself. Near the Monopteros I wanted to relieve nature and found a man asleep behind a bush. He woke up and stared at me dully. I stood by and did not know what to do. The sleeper drew himself up limply and took stock of me more carefully.

"Mornin'," he stammered at last and rubbed his eyes.

"Mornin'," I said likewise.

"No roof to yer head either?" he asked with something of a

Berlin accent. Then, apparently annoyed at my stupid staring, he added :

“ Mister, why do you stare so ! — Just lie down here ! — Cuddle up to me, that’ll be warmer ! ”

His words were so much like the command of a superior that I was frightened. I still hesitated. He was already curling up like a hedgehog, and nodded, as if to say : “ Come along, greenhorn ! ” and lay down again. I did not know what to do at first. I stared stupidly, adventurous ideas flashed through my brain and bewildered me, and suddenly I lay down beside him. He moved, coughed a little, then pressed his back firmly against my chest and his buttocks into my abdomen. He grunted contentedly as he did so. I wanted to retreat, but he wriggled after me directly and muttered encouragement : “ Stop a bit, youngster ! — Don’t be shy ! — Stick to it ! ” And suddenly he pushed his arm backwards and grabbed at me. “ Cuddle ! Cuddle ! ” he lisped, giggling, and tried to draw me nearer to him. It was horribly uncanny, I trembled and shuddered. His speech was new to me, and I had a dark suspicion that his behaviour implied something — God knows what. Loathing possessed me. I wanted to jump up and yet did not dare. When he let go for a moment and grunted again, I cautiously pressed my two palms on the dewy ground, raised myself rapidly, and ran over the grass towards the town like a fugitive pursued. My heart was pounding and the blood raced in my veins.

When I reached the streets it was early morning, the houses were enveloped in thick mist, the trams were already running, the street cleaners were quietly at work, and here and there the shopkeepers were rolling up their shutters. The church clocks struck seven. I walked slowly to recover my equanimity, and only now did I remember Maurus and the future. I waited till I saw the first baker’s shop open, bought fresh rolls, and returned to my room just like a weary night-worker. “ My ! how we slaved again last night,” I said hypocritically, and pretended to be very sleepy. My brother got up and I went to bed.

“ I am going to the registry for confectionery hands ; I shall be

back in the afternoon," said Maurus, and went off. I breathed a sigh of relief like a man rescued from danger. But I was tormented by restless anxiety. My mind was in a whirl. I jumped out of bed, dressed, walked up and down, but could see no way out of the difficulty.

"He must go away. He *must* go away, or I am lost. He *must* go away." The words buzzed in my head unceasingly till I was in despair. Suddenly I had a strange idea. I stood stock-still, considered it again, and yet again — and wrote home to my bitter enemy, Max: "Dear Max, I have got a good place here in Seidl's court confectionery and am earning good wages. I have joined the Catholic Journeyman's Guild and like it. Will you write and tell Maurus to come home at once? He arrived yesterday from Cassel; he has neither money nor work and is very much come down in the world. And he is out of health. I can't look after him, he must go home. And he won't easily find work here. Yours, Oskar."

When I returned from the mail-box, I loathed myself. I was ashamed to the depths of my soul. I could have spit at myself and beaten myself and knocked in my skull. I thought with alarm of what would happen next, and saw no way of escape. I dropped into bed in a state of bewilderment and did not wake till Maurus stood beside me.

"I say, I have found work, and for the time being I shall lodge in Sendling Street — It's only sleeping quarters, but it will do for the present." He told me all this with great joy. To me it was a stab.

"To-morrow I begin work!" he said gaily. "But to-day we'll have a jolly time together, what do you say?"

I got up, washed, and dressed, and we went for a walk. We talked of books and poets and became quite congenial. We made plans for the future and laughed a great deal. We went into a café, and about seven o'clock we parted.

"Sunday afternoon, then," said my brother. I nodded and left him. Maurus, unlike me, was very thrifty, almost stingy. He hardly allowed himself the smallest luxury beyond a cheap Reclam book once in a way, and saved up all his money. Though he was naturally

suspicious, he brought me his hard-earned wages every Sunday to put by, and I noted the amount in a book. Each time he asked: "How much have we by now?" and I showed him the book.

But he did not stay in Munich long. Max really did write that he must come home at once; there was a great deal to do. He expressed astonishment, and I did the same. I advised for and against, as the mood took me. Finally Maurus gave up his place and went home. He promised to send me all the money he could from home, and was firm in his romantic resolve: when there was enough money we would set out together.

"Yes," I said, and again, "Yes." At first I kept the money carefully apart. But Mrs. Ulitsch came and demanded the rent, and no more food parcels arrived. I began slowly to use the money. At first my conscience stung me severely, but gradually I grew indifferent; and when it comes to that, there is no stopping.

Again and again I cursed the money, all the money, and the unlucky meeting with Maurus. Then I wanted to get away, I wanted to go to Theresa and ask her advice and help; but I let things slide. I idled away the days and wrote — poetry.

Come, I said to myself from time to time, he knows nothing about it at present. It will turn out all right. You will simply get work and pay it back secretly. But I did nothing of the kind and did not make the slightest attempt to find employment. The money melted away without any effort on my part.

Then again I was often seized with a passion of vengeance against myself. "Thief! Criminal! Mean scoundrel!" I snarled inwardly, and in order to relieve the gnawing pangs of conscience I suddenly went out and gave five marks to a beggar, treated utterly strange workmen to beer at a public-house, or put a few marks into the offertory of a church.

"He'll kill you anyway; nothing matters, nothing at all!" I said to myself. It's all up with you! Nothing matters!"

Every now and then a mood of stupid, impudent defiance came over me. I met Theresa and boasted how well I was getting on. I said nothing about Maurus.

"I am simply a genius! I am a poet, a made man!" I said, to justify myself in her eyes when she began again about finding work. "I have no need of any of you!"

I worked myself into a rage at the world's failure to recognize my genius, and lived in a state of indifference. Aimless days and weeks passed by. It was then that my mean and bewildered character first came home to me.

Maurus sent less and less. Frequently I had not a farthing. I was glad, and when I was hungry it seemed like a just punishment. Autumn came and Maurus stopped sending altogether. My time passed in dull terror. I read a great deal, and wrote, and composed poetry; but in truth I was simply awaiting the catastrophe.

7

The Search

ONCE AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL printed eight aphorisms of mine unexpectedly and paid five marks. I was like a man intoxicated. My hopes rose. Immediately I wrote a great many crumbs of thought, aphorisms, and poems, and sent them to every possible editor. None were accepted. I had less and less to eat. Maurus's money was all used up, Theresa had become a declared enemy. I wrote and wrote. I must have something in hand, I thought, against the time when the editors asked for more. I must have a selection, material!

I wrote whole nights through. My days were restless, haunted with despair and hunger, and I was utterly alone. I wrote. I was possessed with an overwhelming sense of alienation.

Directly I met Theresa, her lamentations began: "You're young and strong! We must all work."

I went about alone. I did not know a soul, I never entered a tavern. Haunted with fear I roamed about in the shops and museums and exhibitions, sat on benches in the parks, and waited for some human creature. But no one spoke to me.

Then I must work.

And back I went to my room and worked. Impossible articles accumulated, sketches, reflections; I planned writing a large book on education. Then again I wrote appealing letters to well-known authors.

Soup squares, tea, bread!

But I must be resolute and hold out, I thought.

I read Tolstoy and all the books that Nanny had sent after me

secretly. Hunger gnawed. I recited aloud in my room, pacing to and fro. Work! work!

Below me was a large bookbinding establishment. Work! Yes, but what work? What? As a baker? On no account. If only because of Mrs. Ulitsch; besides, I had not qualified as a journeyman, so that I should have to enter somewhere as an apprentice. No, that was out of the question for a budding author.

Every day the bookbinders and stitchers came out laughing and merry from the hum of the workshop. They were safe. They had learned a trade. What should I do? What should I do?

If only I could find a single human creature who would take me under his protection, somehow or other.

Next door to me lived a bookbinder named Schmocker. Every evening he came home from his work, made some cocoa, hummed a tune, and sometimes went out again. I managed to get into conversation with him. I knocked and asked for a newspaper. He opened the door, and welcomed me pleasantly with an engaging smile, saying: "Oh, certainly!"

"One likes to know the latest news," I said so readily that I was surprised at myself.

"Yes, yes. It's absolutely necessary for an author like you," returned the little man. He was of short stature and wore a moustache. He collected the sheets of the newspaper and resumed our conversation, saying that what was in the paper was all lies. "But a man must know how to read between the lines."

"Oh, yes, there's plenty of lying in the world," I said mechanically, and secretly I applied the dictum to myself.

The bookbinder picked up a pamphlet which lay on his table and offered it to me. It was Tolstoy's *Slavery of To-day*. He continued in a tone which betrayed greater prepossession in my favour, and with a marked Swiss accent: "Now that man tells the truth, and that's why the world regards him as a lunatic. But people who possess nothing know he is right."

I reddened. The tone was familiar, I had a sense of kinship. I knew the little book and felt instinctively that my companion would

like to draw me further into conversation. At the same time my curiosity and interest were aroused. "Yes," I said with a sudden feeling of relief, "but who believes in Tolstoy nowadays? A mere handful, and they can do nothing in opposition to the whole world."

The bookbinder regarded me meaningly and said eagerly: "But the handful must increase, and if only quite a few make a beginning and stand up for those principles and teach others what they mean, then the handful will become a multitude, and the world will be changed!"

I did not understand. I stood there stupidly and asked in a tone of embarrassment: "Are there people like that here?"

It seemed that my neighbor had been waiting for this.

"Yes, indeed," he said in a low, solemn voice, "there are a good many of us here. And the syndicalists are with us. Will you come with me one day? You are sure to be interested."

I was as stupid as possible.

"What is the society called?" I asked after a moment's pause.

The bookbinder smiled: "It's not a society. They are anarchists. We meet every Friday in the Glockenbach Restaurant. We hold debates there. Soon we shall have a larger, public meeting again. We want to have it out with the Social Democrats. They are mere bureaucrats, a drag on the movement; they muddle the workers' heads."

When he saw me standing there astonished and stupid, he went to the table again, took a second pamphlet out of the drawer, and handed it to me.

"That tells all about what we are aiming at. Read it through, and if you like, come with me on Friday evening," he said and took leave. I returned to my room and read Landauer's *Call to Socialism*, the second pamphlet given me by my neighbour. On the last page the "Twelve Articles of the Socialist Union" were printed, and below was a blue stamp: "Action Group, Munich."

But there was nothing about anarchists.

Anarchists, I reflected, and vaguely recalled Luccheni, the mur-

derer of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria; I thought of bomb outrages and terrible criminal societies. I pictured in my mind a dark, concealed cellar and saw masked figures gambling with the fate of one prince and another. I was immensely excited and could not sleep for curiosity; Landauer's arguments were scattered to the four winds. I must see this. I must go. These were criminals; a man was given a new name and vanished from the ken of the rest of the world, so to speak. What could be more opportune, when I remembered Maurus? Away, then!

Very early the next morning I got up, went into the street, and looked for the Glockenbach Restaurant. On the way my phantasy painted awful pictures: a cellar full of bombs, adventurous figures, secret doors ——

This was something mighty and new, something beyond the reach of my imagination, unheard of. I must know about it. Away! Away! I was in a glow. I searched like a madman. Confound it, where was this outlawed "Glockenbach"? I was walking beside a stream. The sunshine flickered on the rippling wavelets. There was a little hill on the other side, and the wall of a cemetery. I looked round about. There was no sign of a Glockenbach Restaurant. A policeman came strolling along placidly. I went up to him, took off my hat shily, and asked innocently: "Please, can you tell me whereabouts the anarchists meet here?"

"What?" he said. "The artists?"

"No, the anarchists," I said.

The policeman's face grew solemn, and stonily official. For a few moments he eyed me critically and then said brusquely: "Come along with me!"

Now I was in the soup! My heart was in my boots. I nearly burst out crying. I was taken to the police station.

There was a strong smell of tobacco. Several police officers were sitting round a table. They turned phlegmatically when we entered, and one said to my policeman: "What's he been up to?"

The man whispered something in his ear and went out again. I stood there thoroughly scared.

"Come here," said the man on duty. "Sit down there." Thereupon he took a writing pad out of his drawer and began to ask questions: "What is your name?" I stammered out an answer. The date of my birth, my home, my father's occupation, and my own? I answered question after question, and pictured myself already locked away in a remote prison cell. The man took it all down. When he had finished his questions, he looked at me sharply, faced me full, put his arms akimbo, and began to instruct me.

"However did you get among those people?" he asked. I told him everything and was beginning to whimper. When he saw how helpless I was, he looked gentler. He even patted me on the shoulder, which I felt as a great kindness.

"Young man," he said, "you are still young. Look round for work and keep clear of that disreputable rabble. They're all people who don't want to work, and get their living by all sorts of dishonest means."

I had told him about my sister Theresa, and that I had a dreadfully cruel brother at home and had run away, and now did not know what to do. He wrote out for me the address of the nearest Labour Exchange and advised me to go there; I should be sure to get a junior office job or some kind of work.

"There," he concluded, "now you may go. Remember what I have told you and keep clear of that kind of thing."

I went on saying meekly: "Yes, oh yes, yes," and, "Thank-you very much," and went out quite stupefied. The sense of depression fell like a stone from my heart. But I was really pleased that my suppositions about cellars full of bombs and criminals were proved correct. I was positively vain about my perspicuity, and though I was dreadfully frightened, I could not overcome my curiosity. These anarchist fellows, I thought, are sure to have their secret dodges, and my neighbour will certainly know how to manage the affair so that they can meet undisturbed. I hurried home and told him what had happened to me. The nimble little man sprang out of his chair and ran up and down the room like a madman.

"But, Mr. Graf! Mr. Graf! What have you done, just think of

it! — I may be arrested any minute! They may be coming for me already, the coppers! — My God! My God! How stupid of you!”

I gesticulated and protested my innocence, but he bore me down with his words, spluttered with excitement, and looked at me reproachfully. I was defenceless and stammered:

“Good Lord! If I had known that!”

When at last he learned that I had not been asked about him, he grew a little calmer. Finally he took his overcoat from the peg, slipped it on, and said as he went out: “I must report this at once!” And off he went. I, too, went across to my own room, shaking my head, dropped onto the sofa, and reflected on what had happened.

Amongst the flood of words poured out by the Swiss, he had repeated again and again: “This may injure you seriously. From now onwards you are in the bad books of the police.” What could he mean? I went to bed and could not sleep. Late at night I heard the bookbinder return home. What was going on? It was really sinister.

On Friday the Swiss said to me casually: “We shan’t meet till next Friday. Then you can come too.”

It was growing more and more mysterious. I was on tenterhooks. Come what might, I must see, and, after all, my head couldn’t be chopped off for going this once. If they wanted to lure me into murdering princes, I could always say I didn’t know how to throw a bomb, or I hadn’t a gun, or my sister wouldn’t let me, or something.

That whole week I buried myself in the *Call to Socialism*. I began to see what it was driving at. But what had it to do with anarchism? There was nothing at all in it about bombs or murdering princes. It only repeated quite innocently: “The Socialist Union is a community of those who want to create a new economic system inspired by an ideal.” Further, there was talk of groups which were to build up this community, this new human society, step by step; of the distribution of the land; of revolutionizing our whole manner of life by the power of the spirit; and so on.

Finally, in my bewilderment, being unable to make it out, I started the strange idea that these crafty anarchists possibly used language in a peculiar sense, so that they might not be found out.

Perhaps this entire pamphlet and the whole business meant something quite different from the literal sense of the printed words. A secret language, in fact.

I was satisfied and waited for Friday, tense with expectation.

That evening my neighbour came to my room, rather better dressed than usual, and said pleasantly: "Are you ready?" I nodded. We set forth.

On the way my companion told me how various comrades had been arrested and had their houses searched; he advised me to be very cautious. I said little and looked serious. The further we left our house behind us, the more frightened I became. But it was too late to draw back. I thought secretly: "I will do it just this once, and then never again, not for all the world; I would rather move, and then this damned Swiss can't drag me along with him." But my curiosity was beyond control and finally got the upper hand.

In Sendling Street we entered a public house called "Gambrinus," and groped along a dark corridor to a door. The bookbinder went ahead and opened it. I followed, trembling a little. We were in a dirty, smoke-filled hall which looked bare and uncomfortable. About twenty-five people were sitting at the tables, drinking beer, talking about all manner of things, and smoking. We were hardly observed. The Swiss approached one of the tables, spoke to a shaggy-haired man in spectacles, and introduced me. The man smiled at me and pressed my hand, and I too smiled at last. Several men who were sitting near eyed me critically, and then we sat down. At one table I constantly heard the words "expropriation" and "general strike." Then a man with a pear-shaped face stood up, and there was less noise. This man thanked us all for turning up in such good numbers, and then sat down again. There was a pause.

I was more bewildered and excited than ever, for I thought the real anarchist part of the proceedings was still to come. "Oh, yes," I said to myself, "they're crafty, very crafty. They are sitting here innocently as if they were in a mere tavern, and suddenly a cavity will open under our feet and—down we shall go into the dark conspirators' cave." Meanwhile, however, nothing of the kind occurred.

"Are you going to speak, Mühsam?" said a workman to the man to whom I had been introduced. Others were talking indifferently about one thing or another. They discussed Social Democracy and police spies, and told stories about arrests; and then Mühsam spoke briefly on the aims of the Socialist Union. When he had done, leaflets were distributed. A thin little woman went from table to table and sold the *Socialist*, and offered a number of pamphlets by Kropotkin, Landauer, Most, and Hervé.

Then Morax — the man with the pear-shaped face — stood up and asked: "Who would undertake to distribute the *Socialist* and to do other propaganda work? And we want someone for the correspondence."

The Swiss nudged me. "What about you? — You're an author, you could do that — ?" I stared at him, somewhat abashed, and held up my hand like a schoolboy. I could not speak in that place.

Morax came up to me pleasantly: "Will you undertake the work from now onwards?"

I said: "Yes," and nodded.

Thereupon he gave me a pile of pamphlets, a bundle of the *Socialist*, and leaflets, and told me exactly what to do. I was to give them to people privately and to sell pamphlets at meetings, to distribute leaflets, and from henceforth to receive all consignments of literature. Further, he gave over to me a rubber stamp with the words: "Action Group of the Socialist Union. Place of meeting: . . ."

With this I was to stamp each leaflet and fill in our place of meeting for the time being, with the day and hour. I kept on saying "Yes," and was very proud of being entrusted with such responsibilities immediately. Then the meeting was closed. A few of the members went through a door into the bar, others sat where they were and finished their beer. A number paid and left, wishing one another good-night. Some five of them joined us, including Morax, Franz Jung, Ida, Theo, and George, who was just called "Schorsch."

When we parted Jung promised to come and see me. He had just

published his first book, and I foresaw great advantage to myself from his acquaintance. I shook hands with each of them.

When I was left alone with the Swiss, indeed, I was deeply disappointed with this group of anarchists. As I reflected on the whole affair, all my fine illusions were dispelled. Nevertheless, I was glad. Simply because it had brought me in touch with people.

"It's splendid," I said to my neighbour as we climbed the stairs and I clutched the packages more firmly. "Many thanks for getting me such a good position." I pictured to myself immense activities, and regarded myself as indispensable to the movement. After all, my talent had been recognized. To have to do with the book trade and newspapers, to receive them direct from the publishers, all that opened prospects of getting into print. That night I sat down straightway and wrote an article about oppression and justice, looked up the address in the *Socialist*, and sent it off.

The next day — I couldn't resist telling somebody about my happiness and success — I went to meet Theresa when she left work, which I had not done for a long time.

"I have a splendid post now," I said with a beaming face, and I smiled with the assurance of success. "I am secretary to the Anarchists."

Theresa stood petrified with horror and stared at me round-eyed: "What? — the Anarchists?"

"Yes," I said, and told her that I had been entrusted with an immense trade in books and journals. I was bubbling over with joy.

"Books and newspapers — ?" said Theresa; she was greatly disconcerted, and kept on murmuring and shaking her head: "Hm, hm. . . ."

But I did not listen.

"And only think how easily I obtained the post. I got friendly with my neighbour in the next room, and I went with him and was appointed at once," I babbled on rapidly.

"Ah — well, that's very nice," said Theresa, seeming now really to understand; she went on to ask: "What salary are you getting — ?"

"Salary?" I said, staring at her, for now it occurred to me for the first time that they had said nothing about that. "Salary? — Oh, they haven't told me yet — I must ask."

I was getting bewildered again. Confound it! Why had I forgotten that?

"Is there an office?" continued Theresa.

"No, nothing like that. The literature will all be sent to me by post, and I sell it at meetings, and send out the papers, and have to deal with all the correspondence and any other writing that the Union requires," I told her.

Theresa shook her head again and again. Nevertheless, she said: "Well, well, it's a good thing for you." Then she asked again: "Can't you inquire to-morrow what you will get, and all that. That is always the first thing settled when a firm engages a new man."

"I must wait till the meeting next Friday," I answered. "The members aren't there every day."

"Well, well, we shall see," said Theresa when she said good-bye, and she regarded me anxiously. I promised to let her know at once, or to come and see her the next Saturday and tell her everything myself.

I distributed a number of leaflets, sent one to Nanny, and wrote joyfully to her about my new occupation and happiness; but she must on no account say anything to Maurus. There were people sitting on the benches in the parks. I went up to them and offered them the *Call to Socialism*. They glanced carelessly at the pamphlet and gave it back to me.

The next Friday I spoke timidly to Mühsam: "Excuse me, Mr. Mühsam, my sister wants to know what salary I am to have, and all about the post?"

Morax, who was sitting near, burst out laughing. Mühsam looked at me with something approaching pity, smiled, explained everything to me, and asked what other work I had. I stammered out one thing and another, and literally perspired with embarrassment. I stood like a scared prisoner before an angry judge. Finally — Morax had whispered the story to his neighbours — the whole room was

laughing and looking at me scornfully. I felt as though the ground must open beneath my feet. I must have stood there looking dreadfully foolish and reddening to the roots of my hair ; I was just waiting for someone to say : " Sit down." When at last I sat down beside my neighbour and began to collect myself, I ground my teeth and thought furiously : Bungled again. The Devil take it all ! And I did not speak another word.

I did not go to see Theresa or send any news of myself. I grew more and more conscious of my ill luck. How difficult it was to live, out in the world ! How cultured, and quick of speech, and hardened one had to be ! So I thought again and again, and my respect for anyone who found his feet was unmeasured, though tempered with bitterness. I did not give up the sale of literature all the same, and I went on writing articles and sending them in, but never got any acknowledgment. I collected all the verses that I had written and sent them to Mühsam with a very foolish letter. He returned them to me with an introduction to his publisher, Steinebach. I was to pay the cost of printing. I was in despair and took no further steps. I cursed everything and everybody.

I got to know my neighbour better and better. We went to meetings and gradually I drifted into political circles. I began to have an inkling of what Socialism meant, and at this time I picked up a great deal worth knowing. My horizon was broadened, my tongue grew supple through perpetual arguments with comrades and through reading all the pamphlets. My affairs were in a bad way. And always I was haunted by the incident of Maurus's spent savings ; I searched desperately for some means of earning a living.

Twice Hanged . . .

JUNG FREQUENTLY CAME to see me. He was entirely different from what I had imagined a poet would be. The first time he came I wanted to discuss poets and poetry with him straightway, as I used to do with Maurus. But he was not in the least interested; on the contrary, he hardly listened at first, and then he was really angry at such talk. "Rubbish!" he exclaimed repeatedly in his hoarse voice. He seemed to be repelled by any literary subject. His face was almost always gloomy, and when he really did laugh it sounded noisy and forced, involuntary and nervous. He argued with me by fits and starts and abused me as "bourgeois" when I shyly told him my troubles.

"It doesn't matter at all whether you write a book or not! You must become a real man first, my boy! — It's all rubbish!" So he preached, gnawing all the while at a match. He came nearly every day. He was a riddle to me; everything that he said sounded strange. I never warmed to him. He looked at my books, stormed about Schiller, and told me to come with him. He smiled wryly and said in a mocking voice: "What use have we for Schiller to-day — It's all rot!" I followed him. He sold the books, took me to a public house, and we spent the money on drink. I submitted without opposition, for the last thing I wanted was to be "bourgeois." Whenever he had no money and I, too, had none, he seized some books, made some such exclamation as: "Oh, Heine! Nobody reads the Jews nowadays!" or "A revolutionary oughtn't to have that stupid Lenau." He took my volumes of Lessing and stormed against reading the classics, led me into a second-hand bookshop, and sold all

that we had with us. I never ventured to protest and joined him in all he did. He always pocketed the money and said gloomily: "Come along!" Then we went from one public house to another and spent the money in drink. If there was plenty of money we ordered quantities of brandy; if there was only a little, we had beer. Towards evening we went to the Café Stephanie, which was frequented by artists, and borrowed from acquaintances.

I liked this turbulent life. It kept reflection at bay. I lived in a fog, so to speak. When I woke in the morning I had a confounded headache, and the world lay before me hateful and depressing. The only remedy was drinking, rushing about, and mixing with people.

I got to know all sorts of writers, artists, and other frequenters of the cafés. I sat stupidly among them and tried to look important. They philosophized, disputed, or talked psychoanalysis. Often I listened with eager attention but understood nothing. They brushed aside the outstanding figures in the literary world and the eternal values with a phrase—simply wiped them out. I was as much astounded as a young sparrow, but I said not a word. It was a new world. So this is the beginning of your career, I thought.

When there were no books left, Jung taught me to pawn. I took everything that I could do without to the pawnshop, and kept my head above water. I began a wild Bohemian life. We drank whole nights through at somebody's expense, or played bowls, or danced. If one had no money, another had.

These people were much cleverer and more versatile than I. When I began gradually to talk a little they scoffed at me. They looked askance at me with something approaching pity.

In the Action Group I grew better acquainted with Schorsch. We often met and soon became intimate. We read Stirner, Nietzsche, and Kropotkin, and Schorsch explained everything quite simply. We were soon the best of friends. I bemoaned my lack of assurance and my troubles, and clung to him. He worked by the hour at cake-making and, when I told him that I understood the baking trade, he advised me to go to the bakers' lodge.

"One must contrive to keep one's head above water by the

easiest means," he said, "then one can do what one likes with the rest of one's time." In his free time he read or joined his comrades. He was older than I and had had a much harder life. We often talked by the hour together. He explained what it was to be an individualist. It meant denying everything — the State, society, the law, and the family — and disregarding ethical ideas and everything that the bourgeois had invented. For these dogs had spent centuries devising the whole system with the utmost skill, and adapted it to their own use simply in order that their comfort might not be disturbed, in order that they might sit tight on their possessions, and that the foolish proletariat might work for them and make them still more wealthy. He did not tell me this with animation, but drily, almost childishly. But his deductions were always convincing to me. The whole argument was clear to me from the first. The discussions with Jung and among the literary folk and all the café populace only bewildered me. "Morality? — What is it? — A mental aberration!" he began in the style of Stirner, and everything that acts as a check upon us he called an *idée fixe*. I listened eagerly, and much of what he said literally sounded like a revelation to me. I grew easier now in my mind, my infamous conduct toward Maurus did not oppress me so much, and strange conclusions began to form in my mind.

I went to all the anarchist meetings. These people told me that the individual was the victim of society. I soon realized that this was a valuable idea for me, for I interpreted it thus: you can do what you like; it is society that is to blame, you are merely a victim, without responsibility.

At last, at last, I had got at something — what was it? A new religion, a system of morality specially adapted for myself. I exulted inwardly. I felt absolutely free.

But with all this knowledge my life grew wilder and wilder. It became intolerable even to myself. Things could not go on like that. Suddenly the impulse came upon me to stand on my own feet. I talked it over with Schorsch. He gave me hints to help me in the search for work. I went to the bakers' lodge and had my name

entered for employment. I grew sick of the frequenters of cafés, among whom I had been spending my time. Finally I saw hardly anybody but my neighbour Schmocker and Schorsch.

I was unable to go on paying so much rent, so I shared a room with a friend of Schmocker's in another street. He was stingy, odious, and pedantic. He kept on seeing bugs all day long, and was constantly wiping the walls, and he wanted to force me to do the same. I just let him go on with his apparitions. What did I care for the imaginary bugs that did not bite me!

And now the police came every Sunday at eight in the morning and searched my room for Socialist literature. Two men came each time from the criminal section. They poked their noses into everything, pulled out my trunk, left everything lying about, and went off with a few leaflets and pamphlets. My room-mate was furious and made a great uproar. I kept silence and went to Schmocker with a request that he pacify his friend. It was of very little use.

I hardly had bread to eat and was constantly hungry. Every day I went to the bakers' lodge. There was no situation vacant. Schorsch sometimes brought bread and margarine and scraps of cake. My room-mate had a good situation. He set out all his provisions on the table, and in the morning before he went out he pushed it into the open window to prevent bugs getting onto it. I was hungry and took some of the food. He made a great fuss, and I was furious. I finished up his cheese and said: "You skinflint!" From quarrelling we came to blows. I threw him down. He seemed quiet, and went out. Late that night he came home and went for me. I was already asleep, and it maddened me. I sprang out of bed with a terrible howl of rage, like a tiger, and made for him. A grim struggle began. The landlord came in and abused us. People below knocked. We did not stop till the landlord separated us forcibly. We were both covered with blood; both went to bed. The next day I gave notice.

A week before I moved, a letter from Eugene, dated from a hotel, came like a bolt from the blue. He had come from America with his wife to fetch his illegitimate daughter. I hastened to the hotel. There he was, a fat, bloated man with a lean wife, who laughed in my

face. I sat down. He knew all about me. Emma and Theresa, who had always had a weakness for him, had commissioned him privately to bring me back to honest ways. He behaved in a superior, fatherly way, gave me some money, ordered a meal for me, and promised to come in the next few days and discuss further plans. Then the couple went home.

"If you obey me, you shall have what is due you," he had said at the station when he was leaving. I waited with eager expectation for what was to come.

Two days later — I was alone in my room — Maurus appeared pale and gloomy. As soon as he opened the door I knew what was coming. I shrank back against the wall, expecting that he would almost kill me. But he stood still, pale with anger and trembling a little. He spoke little, but his look was terrible. I lowered my eyes.

"Have you really spent all the money?" he asked.

I nodded.

"Cur! Scoundrel!" he hissed, and his voice shook. He was almost crying with rage: "Oskar! Why did you lie so meanly? Why didn't you tell me, you ——" He came a step nearer. Now it was coming. But no; I felt the cold perspiration in my armpits, I was ashamed, and yet I was glad that at last he knew. I had stolen three hundred marks of his and spent them. He broke out into the bitterest reproaches. He overwhelmed me; I was dumb and stupefied. His voice grew tearful, and then I began to cry too.

"Do you know what you are! You are the lowest criminal, the meanest scoundrel, in the world!" he suddenly said. I looked up. He gazed at me with the uttermost scorn that a man can show. Then he went. He had not struck a single blow; nay, in the height of his passion there had been something of sorrow in his words. It seemed almost as if, in his heart, he had wanted to say: "Oskar, lad! Why were you such an ass? Why did you block this path too against yourself?" There I sat. Alone, utterly alone. It really seemed at moments as if I were walled in by hostile darkness.

I sobbed. I heard a noise outside. Suddenly I remembered the landlord and his family, and my room-mate who might come at any

minute, and all the rest. I clenched my teeth, got up hastily, went to the washstand basin, sponged my face, combed my hair, and behaved as if nothing had happened. I began to whistle and noticed that I was still trembling. I drove all thought of Maurus out of my head and went out.

For long hours I wandered through the streets without thought or aim. When I returned home it was far into the night. This time I crept softly into bed so as not to wake my room-mate.

At the Mill

I WAS PACKING MY THINGS for the move. Morax and Ida were there. There was a knock, and my brother Eugene came in. He stood still, broad-shouldered and supercilious, and did not glance at my visitors or greet them. There was an uncomfortable pause.

"Are you at liberty?" asked Eugene bluntly. I nodded. Morax and Ida got up and left the room silently.

"Come along," said Eugene curtly.

I slipped on my overcoat and followed him. Out in the street he began at once to talk about his plans.

"First and foremost you must get a decent situation. You can go on writing poetry as well," he said. Again I nodded.

"I have just been with the manager of the Tivoli Mill and have spoken to him. He is willing to engage you. For the present you must do some manual work in the mill, later you will be placed in the office. In the evening you can learn typewriting and shorthand. When you have worked several years in the office you can leave and get a better post, if you don't care to stay. They won't expect too much of you at the mill. We have been buying their flour for years and are among their best customers," he said quietly. I saw what he meant and liked it. I was greatly pleased. Eugene asked me to go and see the manager at the mill as soon as I had moved into my new room. Then I could start work at once. I thanked him and asked how things were going on at home and how Mother was.

"Max is going to be married in a week or two," he told me; "he has confessed gradually that he already has an illegitimate son, and there is another on the way. Now he is quite submissive and is

making a show of virtue. But in fact he is only calculating how he can get hold of the property as quickly as possible and turn us out. But he shan't find it so easy."

I said indifferently: "Well, that doesn't concern me any longer. I have already been turned out." Eugene became thoughtful. We went to a tavern and had dinner.

In the afternoon we chanced to meet Schorsch and another man belonging to the Action Group. I drew Schorsch aside and said that I would come and see him in a day or two. When we had passed the couple Eugene asked: "What kind of people are those?"

"Anarchists," I said.

Eugene shook his head ironically and smiled: "What do they want then?"

"We aim at the destruction of the existing State and the establishment of a society based on communistic principles. We want to put an end to servitude; everyone is to have equal rights and equal possessions. Exploitation must cease. Human relations must come to their own in our lives. That is what we want," I said, expounding without conviction. By this time I had read so many pamphlets and books of this type and made so many debating speeches, that I was beginning to learn how to express myself in what I regarded as the proper way.

Eugene laughed: "What fellows you are — There's nothing of that kind in America. It's sheer madness."

I said: "We shall be able to discuss that later on when something has come of it." We went back to my room. I sent for a porter to take my box to my new room, and took leave of my old landlady, who always had a kindly feeling for me.

"You must get that stuff about world revolution out of your head," said Eugene, "or you'll never get on. It's all right to think about that kind of thing, but you can't put it into practice. It's nonsense — It will only get you into trouble."

"If nobody puts it into practice, nothing will ever be done in the world. If we accept that, we had better put a bullet through our heads," was my reply.

Eugene shook his head again. "You're quite mad," he said.

I kept silence.

"Now, you can go to the Tivoli Mill to-morrow and present yourself," he said suddenly. "You have finished moving?"

I said: "Yes."

Next day I went to the mill. In the office I was presented to the manager. He remembered me at home, and smiled good-naturedly into his beard, saying that Eugene had spoken to him and I could start to-morrow. I nodded.

"Come along," he said and took me down to the mill. We were greeted there by the hum and whirl of machinery. The whole building seemed to vibrate.

I was presented to an old man, lean and bent, who shouted dreadfully.

"He is coming to us to-morrow," said the manager, also in a very loud voice.

"Indeed! — He's a weakly lad," said the head miller, and smiled at me scornfully. Then the manager left me. The head miller asked me all manner of questions and showed me the mill. It had four stories. There were sifting machines and grinding machines, in which sacks were hanging and gradually filling. The workmen stood by, tying up the sacks and emptying the barrels of corn into the machines; when they saw me they stopped and looked at me with an expression of aloofness and something like astonishment. Their clothing was white with flour, and so were their faces and beards. What struck me was that they too shouted when they spoke. But one had to in that place.

Then we were taken in the flour lift up to the loft. Hundreds of sacks stood there crowded together and piled up.

When the head miller had shown me everything, he took me to the gate and said: "To-morrow, then, at six o'clock. Don't be late!"

I thanked him and went away.

It was a glorious day. The trees in the English Garden were still bare, and half-melted patches of snow lay on the little strips of grass. The sky was clear, with the brilliant colour of spring-time.

The roofs of the mill outbuildings were dripping. I was in a strange mood, overcome with a longing to go afield, craving suddenly for meadows and hills, and the open country stretching beyond the reach of the eye.

I wandered on, not knowing whither. Then it occurred to me to go and see Schorsch. I knew that I should be sure to find him in the café at this time. I wanted to talk to him. I felt the need of human companionship.

"If he tells me not to," I thought in utter passivity, "I shan't go to the mill tomorrow." I did not consider anything beyond.

"Tomorrow I must start work" — the thought flashed through my mind — "but today, today, life and freedom, mad gaiety, tippling, rowdyism, anything you like." All the world was so indifferent, so horribly indifferent. A desolate feeling of aloofness filled my soul, a homelessness and solitude; I felt myself cut off from all the world.

I walked faster. And in the café I really did find Schorsch.

"What's your American brother up to?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing," I answered in a tone of depression, "I am to begin work tomorrow in the Tivoli Mill. I am to get twenty-two marks a week."

"And what are the hours?" he went on to ask.

"Six to six," I said.

"Foul! I wouldn't do it," he growled.

"That's all very well — But they won't give me any more money, and I don't know what to do," I whined.

"Oh, well, just take it on for a while," said Schorsch, and added: "It won't be so bad when you get into the office."

I was confirmed in my resolve and satisfied, and accepted my fate.

"Good Lord! I would like a good drink and a bit of a row just for today," I said. Schorsch smiled at me and returned:

"So would I."

Then he suddenly asked me: "Did your brother give you any money?"

"Yes, a little," I admitted.

"Come on then, we can do it," he retorted, and we left the café.

Nausea had seized upon both of us. Neither knew what to do with himself. We went along aimlessly, rowdy and boorish. To let off steam we shouted at motors which rushed past, elbowed against pedestrians, now and again yelled out meaningless noises, so that passers-by started in amazement.

In the centre of the town we made our way to a cabaret and spent nearly all our money on drink. On the way home we began to recite Stirner out loud in the street, cursed morality and the bourgeois, and parted in a mood of depression. When I reached my room I suddenly noticed that I had no alarm-clock. It was past twelve. I was seized with uncontrollable rage. I began to swear loudly.

There was a knocking on the wall. I swore still louder. A bed creaked. Then there came a knock at the door: "Mr. Graf!"

It was my landladies' whining voices. They were three old maids, horribly servile and bigoted.

"Yes," I shouted, and flung the door open. "What does this mean? Didn't I tell you that tomorrow and every day now I shall have to get up at half past four! Why didn't you put an alarm-clock in the room?"

"Oh, but Mr. Graf — Mr. Graf!" whimpered the old maids, and drew back. "Our clock won't work — besides — we really will call you."

"I should like to know which of us will oversleep," I snapped, and banged the door. I heard the three old maids shuffle back, whining, to their room, and flung myself sullenly on the bed. I soon fell asleep without undressing. About two o'clock I woke up. I was seized with anxiety. I listened for the striking of a clock. Not a sound. It seemed that dawn was breaking. I jumped out of bed and ran about, and flung open the window in order to hear better. Not a sound. I began to swear again. Something moved opposite. I swore louder. "If I can't sleep, those old sticks shan't sleep either," I thought in my rage.

Nor did they. Again there was a knocking and a whining voice: "Mr. Graf, it is only two o'clock."

"To the devil with it all!" was my good-night greeting to the old maids. Exhausted, I sat down at the table to await the morning. There were a few more whimpering sounds, then silence reigned once more.

The hours crept slowly by, unspeakably slowly. I was cold. But it was too late to go to sleep. When four o'clock struck I set out. It was some distance, across the English Garden, and it was easy to lose one's way. But I wanted to be as punctual as possible on the first day. The air was cold. The trees stretched out ghostly branches to the moon. My steps rang hard. I arrived in time. It struck a quarter to six as I left the park. It was still dark. The giant mass of the humming mill towered to the sky. The light from its many windows fell on the oily river in which its reflections shimmered.

As I entered the gate I was met by the workmen. Again they looked at me with strange astonishment. I followed them. We went into a shed, where we changed our clothes. Then to the mill. The head miller was already standing there with his eyes on the clock. Six had hardly struck when he began to scurry. It was almost like a parade.

The workmen went up to the various floors in the lift. I had to stay with the old man. He shouted at me as I stood there, not knowing what was to come, and thrust a broom into my hands. I swept mechanically, though there was nothing to sweep up. Then the head miller suddenly shouted and beckoned to me.

"Stand here; the sacks will be coming down; you must catch them and carry them away. Over there. And pile them one against another," he commanded.

I had to stand at the opening of a wooden gutter and to catch the sacks which slid down from the fourth floor. I had barely grasped what was required when a sack came spinning down. And — bang, it knocked me over and there I lay, with the flour bursting out of the sack. I was neither skilled enough nor strong enough for the work. The head miller stood by. I saw him splutter and swear, then go to the gutter, catch the sacks of flour, and swing them on one side. Anxious as I was to do my duty, I wanted to take the broom

at once and sweep up the flour from the burst sack, whereupon the old man suddenly turned upon me: "Stand there! You can do that afterwards."

He now showed me how to catch the sacks. That went on the whole morning. By midday the palms of my hands were raw and smarted horribly. I showed them to the head miller. He smiled and said: "That will get better in time. We have all had the same."

In the afternoon I had to carry sacks from the hoist with several other workmen. Consignments were being sent off. At first I broke down, but when they all made fun of me I was seized with fury. Then I got through with it. I staggered breathless under the sacks. By evening my back was raw, and when I undressed my shirt stuck to the broken skin. I cried silently and cursed my brother and the whole world. But there was nothing to be done; I had to stick to it. And so things went on day after day. The elder workmen kept for themselves the pleasantest work, that of tying up the sacks, and I should not have dared to make any comment. As time went on I became more accustomed to the heavy labour. True, every day my shirt was stuck to my blood-stained back; but some day, I thought, my skin would grow thick and hard. To the devil with it all!

Every evening I washed my back with cold water and rubbed in boracic ointment. One of the men at the mill said, when I complained to him of the pain: "That is really bad — your skin won't get hard — It always hurts like that at first."

I gave it up in despair, clenched my teeth, and went on and on hauling the sacks. I had to make the best of it. What could I do? I had no more money, and on the third day I had to ask for an advance. The clerk scanned me contemptuously and gave me ten marks.

I wanted to write a terrible letter to Eugene, but I could not. It might have got into Max's hands. He would have come and beaten me. I dropped the idea and slaved away. Every evening I was dead with weariness. My limbs felt crushed, I could hardly lift my feet, my back smarted, and my mind was a blank.

Gradually I got to know the workmen better. I did stupid things

and they laughed. There were different kinds of work, including so-called "shirkers' jobs," such as sweeping the cellar or staying a long time in the lavatory. I soon learnt these tricks. Sometimes, when four or five of us were piling up sacks in the cellar, we got into conversation. All sorts of complaints were voiced. The men grumbled.

"It will always go on like that if the workers don't wake up," I said.

"Wake up!" ejaculated the others. "What can we do?"

"Make short work!" I said audaciously.

"Short work? And how?" asked several, and stared at me.

"Simply knock down the manager and the head miller and take over the mill yourselves," I explained.

They laughed and said: "You're ferocious!"

I said: "Until the workers rise in revolt, it's all no good."

They all laughed again, but several looked askance at me. I did not care. Better starve and beg than go on slaving like this, I thought.

But it did me harm. From thenceforward the head miller treated me roughly. Someone must have told him how I had abused him.

There was more and more work. I went through it in total apathy, went home in the evening, and calculated how I could get money together most rapidly. I allowed myself no comforts. I only wanted money so as to be able to throw up the whole concern. That was my sole thought. I had no care for what might follow. Money! Again money! There was a curse on it. It made a thief and a scoundrel of a man. It destroyed a man's soul.

Schorsch often came. When I lay exhausted in my room, like a hunted animal, he said: "It's rotten, this job of yours. You must get out of it. It's killing you." I lay in a stupor and merely nodded. As I did not want to waste money, I did not buy an alarm-clock, and often I slept only a few hours, and uneasily at that, then got up, made tea, and set out for the mill. I saw no more of Eugene. Occasional parcels of food came from home, but there was no letter with them.

The weeks passed by. I was unstrung, angry with all the world, and lived in total isolation. My landladies' little dog always barked when I came in; the three whining women stood there to command, smiled with servile friendliness, and said: "Do you want any milk, Mr. Graf? Shall we light your stove, or are you going straight to bed?"

Or they deplored my looking so ill, so hunted and restless. What affair was it of theirs, these three old maids!

And whenever they stood there the little dog snapped out from beneath somebody's petticoats. I could have spit at them all, I so hated the whole thing. All the world was loathsome to me. I was weary, utterly weary. What concern had I with all this whining? And the dog, I had long had a grudge against him. I would stop his mouth the next chance I got.

One Sunday afternoon when the three spinsters had gone to vespers, I seized the brute in my towel and flung it into the closet. It screeched horribly, rushed out, and made a mess of the whole passage. But after that it always vanished when I came, and crept in alarm into some corner.

The three said nothing, but only trembled.

Once Eugene came. I was irritated by his stoutness. His gestures were phlegmatic and Americanized, and he spoke with an ugly intonation.

"You've landed me in a nice mess!" I said bitterly. He made some show of surprise, but was not perturbed. He told me all that he had done in America and — he had no better prospects now than I — he must look round to see how he could earn a living for his wife and children.

"You don't worry much about it," I repeated sullenly. He became rather affectionate and even confidential.

"My dear fellow, if you knew what a hole I'm in — I have undertaken an agency — as a matter of fact you could help me," he told me. Then he took a longish, red case out of his waistcoat pocket, opened it, and showed me a small, very handy glass syringe, together with spraying tablets; this was a new patent for which he had

undertaken the agency. He explained it to me and expressed the opinion that with effort it would be possible to get quite a good sale for it.

"Well, and what am I to do?" I asked.

He came closer to me and grew more animated: "Every woman needs it, don't you see — It is chiefly prostitutes that will buy it, and you know your way about among them, don't you? You have lived among all those people, and know the various cafés that they frequent — Do you understand? — You can go there in the evening or on Sundays and sell the syringes over the tables — There is money to be made that way."

He gazed at me. All of a sudden I saw this man of the world small and helpless, and I thought with venomous satisfaction: "Ah, so you're in the slough too; that's right. Good!"

For a moment I felt an impulse to break into loud and vulgar laughter. I did not do so, and only replied sullenly:

"I don't know any prostitutes, and I don't understand the thing! You must manage for yourself! I don't want ever to hear from any of you or see you again."

He was quite cool, rose up, and, recovering his supercilious air, replied: "Very well. I have done what I could for you. If you like to miss the chance, it's nothing to me."

Then he left me.

I went on slaving at the mill and heard nothing further from home.

Oh, if only the whole accursed world would plunge into hell! I was sick to death, and this one idea buzzed unceasingly in my head.

It was in this mood that Schorsch met me one Sunday.

"Come on," he said curtly, "we are off to Italy, so get ready." I looked up at him.

"Have you the money?" I asked.

"Enough for the journey to Locarno," was his answer. I had always imagined that hundreds of marks were needed for such a journey.

He asked: "How much money have you got?"

"Just my last week's wages, and I have to pay those three females today," I told him.

"Rot!" he exclaimed resolutely, with a gesture of determination. "We'll just bolt."

We went to my room and waited till the old maids had gone to vespers. We bundled everything hastily into my trunk. Schorsch jumped on the lid and forced it to, I locked it. Then we packed what we most needed in a cardboard box and went out.

"I will just go along and pick up something for us to eat from home," I said to Schorsch in the tram. He stared at me round-eyed: "What! Now, you're mad." He was indignant.

"Nonsense. I'll just telephone home on the chance, ask for Nanny, and tell her to come and meet me with a parcel of food. That will be all right. There's nobody else there now; it'll work, just wait and see," I said in a quiet tone, and added reassuringly: "I'll be back by the evening for certain. Then at least we shall have something on the journey."

He clapped his hands to his head and exclaimed: "Good Lord! What an ass you are! Anything more stupid!"

But I would not let him stop me. I carried out my plan and it really succeeded perfectly. In the evening I came to the café with two enormous packages of food. We took leave of one or two acquaintances and went to the station. At half past ten the train bore us out into the darkness.

Schorsch gave me a fabulous description of Switzerland.

"There are no policemen there, it's all honourable and democratic," he declared. Gradually we fell asleep. In Bregenz we were wakened by Swiss customs officials. In the morning light we reached Zurich, where we had several hours to wait and went out to see something of the town. About four o'clock we started again for Locarno. I had never been so far in my life, and suddenly I began like a madman disputing with my companion about the direction.

"We are going in the wrong direction! I tell you I know we are going in the wrong direction!" I blustered.

I was not satisfied till we steamed into Locarno.

"What a job to travel with you!" said Schorsch with a sigh of relief. We alighted and spent the last of our money on putting up at the Hotel Alpino. Next day we meant to look up some fellow anarchists in the Communist Colony at Brione, so as to get lodging there.

The First Breath of Freedom

THE SKY WAS DEEP BLUE and seemed marvellously near when we awoke. The hotel courtyard was strangely quiet and called to mind rather a monastery than a guest-house. In the centre rose a ruined fountain, which plashed and murmured softly. Wild vines climbed along the walls. Open corridors connected by worn stone steps ran round the building. To go into the hotel one went through the courtyard.

We ate what was left of the food we had brought on the journey, went down to the house-porter, took our luggage, paid the bill, and went out into the street.

"Now we have exactly four francs left," said Schorsch. We did not mind. An inexpressible peace filled our souls.

A wealth of colour and a sense of homeliness enveloped us. Lovely, brown-skinned Italian girls whisked past us, the clumsy trams hummed peacefully along the narrow streets, vulgar-looking men leaned broad-shouldered against the walls at the street-corners. The shops were bright and open and gay, and over all the sun, high in the sky, shed its kindly rays.

We wandered idly on into the town, and sat on a bench in the Piazza Grande with sleepy, blank minds. A shabby-looking man came up to us and said something like: "Papiero, Cartonaggia?" We thought he was a tramp who wanted to join us, and I spoke to him promptly and light-heartedly in a broken mixture of Munich dialect and scraps of Italian: "Oh! Lazzaroni too? Niente, not us. We are waiting here, and afterwards we are going up to Brione to see some friends."

But the man now took out his certificate as a constable, and said: "Polizia." We understood that immediately. Moreover he gesticulated and threw his arms about and gave us to understand that we must follow him. We went with him.

"Ah!" I said to Schorsch with a malicious smile. "Ah! So that's what happens in free Switzerland. Aha!"

We plodded along mechanically. The sun shone, the sky above us was clear and blue. Everything was gay and warm, blissful, lovely, and fresh, all except this miserable dog who had us in custody.

This sort of thing happens all over the world no doubt, I thought. It's all the same, Munich or Switzerland.

At the police station we had first of all to give an account of our financial position. But curiously enough nobody asked for our identification papers, and it was just as well, for in our haste we had not given them a thought. I possessed a bill of lading that had been stamped again and again, a certificate of Bavarian nationality, and a certificate of discharge from the Karlsruhe hospital in the name of my brother, Maurus.

I had a suspicion that they would enquire into our identity and — Schorsch had told me this — dump us over the frontier. But they could only speak a few words of German, nor did they seem to take the affair seriously. A short, fat man on a revolving chair turned over the leaves of a dictionary, hunted and hunted, and finally read aloud: "Un-gefähr?"

He talked fast and confusedly, and we answered again and again: "Not Lazzaroni!" Finally we told him our comrades' addresses and were dismissed.

"A bit more freedom than with us! That's first-rate!" I exclaimed with satisfaction as we left the stuffy building.

As we were climbing the hill at Minusio on the way to Brione, a man came striding towards us, looking like a gipsy.

"That's Theo!" said Schorsch, and shouted the name out loud. The stranger beamed and laughed and came to meet us with open arms. He really was our comrade from the Munich Action Group. He had fled from Munich when his time came for military service,

and since then he had lived according to nature, a life based on something approaching anarchist principles.

There were three other comrades. We were delighted, and hastened to tell him our own experiences. We climbed slowly higher and higher. The flat roofs of Locarno and Minusio sank further and further among the treetops. The lake stretched broad and gleaming. A steamer churned leisurely through the water. Far away the flat square houses of villages on the further shore stood out in the glassy air, and the softly rounded slopes of the Italian mountain spurs shimmered peacefully in the blue.

Theo took us to his quarters and fetched the rest of the comrades. Grete, his friend, gave us something to eat. We decided to go to the Christian settlement, "Love," whose members Theo knew, and there to get lodging. It was a modern-built villa with vineyards and a large vegetable garden. A pious community lived here according to Christian principles. The elder received us kindly and allotted us a room for ten francs a month. We brought our luggage and got settled. Meantime the evening had fallen.

Dead tired, but relieved, we lay down on our mattresses. When we had lain so for a short time, we suddenly heard eager whispers on the other side of the partition. We listened more attentively, and looked round the room, which was really only a boarded compartment. Suddenly there was a scratching sound, as if a cat were sharpening her claws, on the wooden partition which separated us from the other room. We felt uncomfortable. The full moon was shining into the room. Up above we noticed a hole in the wall, lined with metal, which probably served as a chimney opening. I nudged Schorsch and whispered to him softly: "Do you hear?" He nodded. We listened again, and for some reason we fixed our eyes on the chimney opening, for it was from there that the whispering and scratching came. Suddenly a face appeared at the opening. We saw it plainly. Then another appeared and vanished. There was more whispering, and again a face appeared. We lay still, but ready for a fight. Involuntarily I called to mind the uncanny story of the Inn in Spessart, and others of the same kind. And since these gruesome

tales had always excited me greatly, I naturally harboured all manner of fancies in my own mind.

I crept close to Schorsch and breathed in his ear: "Fine Christians these! Just listen, my boy, let's go for them! No shilly-shallying!"

What business had those fellows in the other room to watch us so closely at night, why were they whispering, and what were they talking about? No doubt they were criminals concealed under a Christian exterior, or—more probably, since our comrades had spoken of Spiritualism—they thought we were ghosts. We were very tired, and after a time our rage at these scoundrels who would not let us sleep became too much for us. I nudged Schorsch again and whispered softly: "Come on, let's get up and make all sorts of mysterious signs." With one leap we sprang out of bed and began to make an unholy row, reciting mystic verses, adoring the moon, kneeling like Mohammedans, and gliding about like ghosts. Finally we undressed and danced magic dances stark naked, without looking to see what was going on at the opening. And, indeed, the noises grew less, the whispering ceased, no further faces appeared. There was quiet. We got back to bed laughing. Oho, we thought, but we really did not know why.

At last we fell asleep. The next day we told our comrades what had happened. They simply said that these settlers were queer, rather confused in their notions, but they knew of nothing in particular. They told us further that they sometimes held spiritualist séances and belonged to some sect. We climbed a hill and cut stout cudgels, which we took to bed with us, and lay listening again. And the whispering and spying actually did begin again. Suddenly there was a pause. Both together we seized our cudgels and flung them against the wall with all our strength, then lay still and snored to indicate that we were soundly asleep, and listened intently.

It took effect. First there was a moment of deathlike stillness, then the faces bobbed up again at the opening and the eyes were full of terror. We suppressed our laughter. There was an excited twittering on the other side, then we heard a door open and there was a knock at our door.

We were ready for anything. Nevertheless, we called out angrily, as if we had been waked out of a deep sleep: "Well! What is it?"

"Something has happened," came a whimpering voice. We slipped out of bed, seized our cudgels hastily, hid them under the bedclothes, and then opened the door. There stood the three men in their long night-shirts, trembling with fear. One was flashing a light about in the passage. They wanted to begin a search. We said sulkily that they might spare us such fooling and leave us in peace, and we went back to bed. Secretly we were shaking with laughter. We heard the three wandering round like ghosts for a long time, then at last they returned to sleep. But that was the end of the whispering and spying through the chimney opening. Occasionally it recurred, but we got used to it and let them do as they liked.

Now, however, we saw a fresh ghost every evening, and often we roused the whole household. A white cat prowled about. A nightly phantom wandered among the vines. But it was not our sole aim to cause excitement. We bewildered these people with calculated intent. We had no money and did not know how to pay for our lodging. Every time that the Elder approached us we trembled inwardly. We read in his eyes what was coming, and began at once to tell most uncanny tales. The good fellow could not get in a word edgewise; we were as inventive as the boldest of poets. The master of the house retired, shaking his head.

No money! Then we must work! I thought of the mill with a shudder.

The group of comrades included six besides us: Gobmaier — a genuine Munich product with strange, confused ideas of colonization — with his wife and little boy. Then Jenke, a decorative artist from Saxony; Giuseppe, a locksmith from Munich, good-natured and of soldierly build, with a curious, awkward smile always on his lips; and finally Theo with his Grete. Each of them had built a dwelling and only worked now and again, so as to be able to devote their leisure to their own free development. In fact, they were all people with an inner calling, with something of an artistic urge. What was vital to them was the inner spirit, and the true anarchist's

task was to shape his outward life according to the law of his inmost promptings, in perfect freedom, unchecked and, as far as possible, untouched by civilization.

Theo's was the guiding mind. There was much discussion. Plans were made for a future anarchist settlement in Brazil.

Gobmaier was the most practical among them. He was an upholsterer by trade, but there was nothing he could not do, and to his mind the greatest advance was for a man to be able to produce everything that he himself needed—build his house, make his clothes, cultivate the land. He worked incessantly, and in his leisure hours he wrote naïve verses about Lake Maggiore, poems on freedom, and aphorisms. Jenke was a thoroughgoing vegetarian and rather disposed to follow nature; he painted tiny pictures, and justified vegetarianism in his diary. He was very gentle and he spent a great deal of time observing his dietary theory and recommending it to others. On this he was almost a fanatic, though fanaticism seemed comical in him. When we visited him, he read us passages from Nietzsche or Forel. But everything led up to vegetarianism. When one day I read Zarathustra's "Night Song" with much feeling, he said in ecstasy: "That man was undoubtedly a vegetarian."

"Very pretty," I said one day, when he showed me his little pictures. That made him angry, and he led me to the door and began to expound nature to me. He raised his hands to his eyes, like blinkers, looked out at the landscape, and said: "There, I see blue, don't I?—that's how I paint it. That is because I am specially favoured; it's a gift of nature."

I nodded repeatedly. He returned to the house and declared: "But a man must be a bit skilful to do that sort of thing."

Giuseppe, who lived with him, took no notice of him, and it seemed to me that in secret he was mocking him. He was prosaic all round, and always occupied with some practical piece of work.

The ties of comradeship within the party were loosely knit. Each one lived his own life. They were united only by a common convic-

tion. There was no room for anarchists in countries with governments, in towns, in the midst of civilization. So their idea was to find a place where they could go back to the beginning: some place on the face of the earth where absolute freedom, making such a life possible, might give rise to such communities. For this reason the scheme of emigrating to Brazil was discussed with daily growing eagerness. Every evening they met and read Kropotkin, Landauer, and Proudhon, and debated on what they read. The debates were often heated, but the disputants understood one another. By day they were all at work.

We had no money. Our landlord grew pressing. I cursed Switzerland. In Ascona work was to be had with a certain Gräser. But he paid no money. He only gave food and shelter, and he rejected all taint of "civilization." There were plenty of settlements of that kind. It was worth while for those who had some property; sometimes it was well worth while; thus, for example, deserters or Russian revolutionaries were obliged to work for these drones without pay.

In these settlements every human type cropped up: revolutionaries, vegetarians, artists from all four points of the compass, believers in fresh air treatment, and lastly writers and devotees of nature with long hair, dressed in a single shirt of coarse sackcloth. Some thoroughgoing plant-eaters had a large settlement at Verita, known as "The Whortleberry." There they proclaimed the cult of nakedness, lived as new men, and practised free love. Scraps of paper with propagandist verses were stuck on all the trees, inviting people to join them, but woe to him who smelt of soap, or brought any with him, or actually smoked —

Our need of money grew more and more pressing. For several days we worked at Gräser's. Then Schmidt, the house-painter in Locarno, gave us work. Nanny sent money. So we got along.

"To the devil with this life here," I growled one day during a discussion. "It is just the same as anywhere else."

Schorsch moved; he built himself a couple of rooms in a mill and finally he found work as a confectioner in Locarno. I suddenly hated

my surroundings; I called Jenke a "devourer of grass and stomach-revolutionary," and shut myself off. I did not like this placid, argumentative life. I spent my last francs on buying provisions and showed my face no more, lying on my bed the whole day, reading or writing. Sometimes I tramped the country alone.

One day at Ascona when I got into the motor bus for Locarno, a gentleman sat beside me whose face seemed very familiar. The Leipzig *Anarchist* had printed his photograph a short time before on his birthday.

A companion was talking with him in French, so that I could observe him at leisure. He was a small man and wore a long, well-combed grey beard which half covered his chest. His eyes moved restlessly behind his glasses, and he had a heavy face with sharp, protruding cheek-bones. Only his forehead rose smooth to the shadow of his hat.

The two men alighted at Locarno. I followed them, approaching nearer and nearer to them. The little, grey-bearded man was growing nervous. I came right up to him and touched him on the shoulder, so that he turned round in amazement and regarded me with an air of embarrassment.

"Excuse me, have I the honour of addressing Prince Peter Kropotkin?" I said rather awkwardly, with a slight laugh. The man nodded pleasantly and scanned me hastily. At that time I only wore a shirt and trousers, always walked barefoot, and had long, flowing hair.

"Excuse me," I repeated rather hurriedly, "my name is Graf. I am a Socialist, and I saw your photograph in the Leipzig *Anarchist*."

"This is a young comrade," Kropotkin now said to his companion, and introduced me. Gradually we got into conversation. I praised Kropotkin's books and told him about the movement in Germany. Both listened with interest.

"Do you write for Socialist papers?" asked the Prince, when I made a passing mention of authorship; and he gazed at me.

"No, only for comic papers," I replied. The two took stock of me again and smiled gently. Then there was nothing to talk about.

I grew uneasy. I said something about my German comrades in Brione and took leave where the road turned off.

"I hope we may often meet," I said as we shook hands, and turned away in haste. I reached Brione in a fever of breathless excitement, and told my comrades what had happened to me. They were all enthusiastic, and wanted to arrange a ceremony of homage and to visit the Prince immediately.

"That's like a German Veterans Club on the anniversary of Bismarck's death," I objected. My words struck home. We began to quarrel. Somehow I had offended them and they tried morosely to justify themselves.

"It's quite different, honouring intellectual achievement which may be of the greatest service to all mankind in the future: it's not a bit like an artificial cult of rank, which is no good to anybody and only besots the masses," Theo argued again and again, and continued: "If we feel impelled to pay outward homage to Kropotkin, our action arises — one may almost say — spontaneously from our sound sense."

"The German Veterans Club acts spontaneously, too," I said maliciously.

"Sophist," shouted Theo, and they cast angry glances at me.

"Formerly people had their Kaiser, or some such creature, now you have set up another god for yourselves," I said rising, and I added, smiling: "It's always the same; man must have some authority, or it's all up with him." We parted, with something of a spiritual barrier dividing us.

Queer creatures, German revolutionaries, I thought, as I walked along in the dark; they're like boys of twenty, eternally at war with themselves, with idols that they can't assimilate; they're Don Quixote in the very flesh, with his everlasting urge to be a Nazarene.

The night air was heavy with fragrance. The moon sailed through fleeting clouds. Down below, Locarno flecked with lights lay reflected in a peaceful, silver-blue expanse of the pale lake, and the sky above seemed infinitely far away.

Just before I fell asleep I sat up suddenly and exclaimed to myself: "It's all madness, I must get away. It's all filth."

11

The Breach, And a Return to the Morass

THERE'S A FLY in every ointment. To the devil with Italian Switzerland! There were too many lizards. From my earliest childhood I have been afraid of these loathsome creatures. I am capable of running miles when one of these reptiles suddenly appears in my neighbourhood. Anything but that! And here the rocks were alive with them, like a single pendant mass.

And when it rained there were quantities of salamanders. They were more loathsome still. They remained motionless, the head a little raised, and glowered at me with an icy stare.

I hardly dared go out alone, stayed on the high road, and at last, in spite of the glorious weather, I lay in bed and read till late afternoon; in the evening I hurried down to Locarno and accompanied Schorsch on his return from work. My debts were mounting every day. Whenever I went to the garden gate the head of the settlement was standing there and whimpering: "Mr. Graf, what about payment?" I pacified him and asked for the bill, saying I must send it home. That was all a lie and no money ever came. But what else was I to do? The most plausible excuse was a tale of delay in the post. When even that failed I gave him my relatives' address and said he had better write himself. As I had expected, still nothing came. The position grew more and more distressing, more and more suspicious. I wrote to Nanny. She wrote that she had sent me twenty marks addressed Poste Restante, Locarno. Nothing, absolutely nothing arrived. Every day the clerk took out a bundle of money orders, turned them over phlegmatically, and said indifferently: "Niente." I lost my temper, made an uproar, called the whole

postal service a pack of thieves and idiots, and was arrested. After I had been confined for three hours in a bare room, a German post office clerk came and made inquiries. I told her my trouble and showed her Nanny's letter. She was very friendly and she herself looked nonplussed. Suddenly she seemed to have an idea. "Perhaps the money has been sent to Lugano by a mistake," she said, and looked at me with an engaging smile.

"What has that to do with me?" I blustered.

"Don't be upset, Mr. Graf, I will make inquiries there at once," she said politely. She merely smiled at my black looks. I reddened and felt embarrassed, but suddenly I broke out angrily again, to hide my lack of assurance, and grumbled: "Very well, but why wasn't that done long ago? I have been enough put out!"

The young lady smiled again: "You have certainly been put out."

"I want the book in which complaints are entered," I interrupted. Without any reason it suddenly occurred to me that my father had once told me there was a book at every German post office in which people could enter complaints. This book had to be shown to the Government authorities at the end of every year. Just wait, I thought as I realized this, I'll cook your goose for you. I rejoiced at this suddenly acquired weapon, and was already mentally formulating my complaint. But nothing perturbed the young lady, and she continued to smile. She rose and gave me a printed form in which I was to write my exact address.

"That's right," she said. "I will make inquiries at once, and you are sure to receive your money in a few days." She remained standing, took stock of me again, and said with a pedagogic air, at once gentle and compelling: "Mr. Graf, all Germans behave abroad as if everything existed to serve their convenience! — It's a great mistake."

I was taken aback, and stared at her in silent embarrassment. Then she left me. A policeman came and released me. I passed through the darkening corridors to the streets, where night was falling. When I reached Brione I hunted out Schorsch immediately and abused him violently for his bombast about Swiss freedom.

"A nice nation, these Swiss gentlemen! A pack of postal thieves and spies, vegetarians and lunatics, that's what you get here! Old maids and moralizing professors!" I argued, to which my companion replied again and again:

"You're an idiot!"

Thank God, it was late at night when I reached home and the people of the house were already asleep.

Very early the next day there was a knock at my door. I jumped out of bed, and was already congratulating myself. Aha, I thought, the complaint has taken effect! There was the postman, and he gave me a notice from the police. I was to present myself at eleven o'clock, it said.

"Spies! Spies on every side!" I snarled, and cursed Schorsch and the whole Swiss nation. I dressed, made some tea, and went down to Locarno. There stood the landlord again at the garden gate whimpering his everlasting demand.

"I have got to go to the police station now," I roared at him, so that he really started back.

At the police station I was shown a long letter from my brother Max, declaring that I had fallen among anarchists and that my mother was crying her eyes out. He demanded my immediate deportation. Once again, the officer could speak only broken German. He sat in his revolving chair, wholly indifferent, pushed the letter across to me, and went on turning the leaves of a thick volume, without troubling further about me. Probably they will ask for my identification papers now, was my first thought, and I prepared to familiarize myself with the prospect of deportation. There's one good thing, I reckoned, you'll get away cheaply from this foul country. But the gentleman in the revolving chair seemed not to want anything more of me. He did not even listen when I said: "He's simply informing against me." He went on placidly looking in his book. Then another gentleman appeared, scanned me quietly, and asked whether I was working. I professed to write for the press and to be a free lance author, said that the letter had been sent out of pure malice and vindictiveness, and when I saw that the man

was listening quietly, began to tell my whole life story. When I had just about got half way through, they put a paper before me with something on it about a tax on visitors, and asked me to sign. I did so, and was soon allowed to go away again.

Out in the street I exulted over Max's unsuccessful attempt. I was entirely reconciled to the police and to Switzerland, looked for Schorsch, and told him all about it. Then we went to the Temperance Restaurant at the station. We had often been there before and had made the acquaintance of an extremist of the Grutli Party,¹ who always elected to expound his views to us in German-Swiss dialect. It was always the same tale. We no longer heard what he said, but were simply amused at his way of saying it.

The more excited he became, the more we goaded him on. The trend of his ideas was that the workers would gradually gain possession of the land and the factories, that the standard of living would rise steadily, and property would cease to exist.

"It's all the same in the Communist State if I stand here or there! everything belongs to each," he declared eagerly, and traced diagrams on the floor. To his mind Zurich and Berne were the most progressive towns in the world. But he hated Locarno. There were no public conveniences. He got so excited over this deficiency that he threatened bombardment by the workers. He drew a strict line of demarcation between free-thinkers and Socialists.

"Oh," he said, "free-thinkers — free-thinkers are quite different from Socialists! Free-thinkers are out against God, but the Socialists, they are aiming at something thoroughgoing —." And so on. We bit our lips to hide our laughter.

"And Switzerland! Switzerland is quite different," I said with the solemnity of the grave, but he only replied with the stereotyped phrase: "That question of the nations, that will all settle itself when the Socialists are at the helm!"

Finally we — or at least I — were deeply in debt at the Temperance Restaurant. I can still see the honest, stout proprietress taking stock of me and saying: "But I'm dealing with an honest

¹ Left wing Socialists.

man!" when I spoke with lively eloquence of my debt. I left my overcoat behind and never returned. The ground was beginning to burn under my feet. Every day I ran to the post office, giving the Temperance Restaurant a wide berth. The money did not come. I had nowhere to turn. I was half resigned to my fate. One day I met Kropotkin when I was in a mood of depression and indignation over these postal delays. I told him what had happened and showed him Nanny's letter, bemoaning my ill fortune. He became embarrassed.

"I haven't a halfpenny left. I don't know what to do," I said. The good man became more and more embarrassed and flustered. I wanted to calm him and say: "I don't want you to give me anything, I didn't mean that." But he had turned away suddenly and was gone. I never met him again. I only saw him sometimes in the distance.

At last, at last the twenty marks arrived. I paid my landlord five francs and spent the rest on margarine, macaroni, sugar, bread, and a little butter. Then I shut myself off again from all the world and lived on my provisions as best I could.

Our community at Brione decided at last to emigrate to Brazil. I opposed the plan and called it running away from the world. There were animated discussions. I did not often appear even among these friends. Sometimes I did not leave my room for three days. My landlord was waiting about for me to pay the remainder of my debt. I evaded him. My supplies gave out. I ate sorrel and even baked it in the end, though the first attempt made me sick. While the people of the house were at meals I slipped out secretly, when I could no longer bear confinement within four walls. I wandered about the country aimlessly and without interest, and in the evening I went to Locarno and fetched Schorsch. We argued in his hut till far into the night and I advised him not to go with the others to Brazil. At that time he was beginning to copy drawings of Michael Angelo, and he showed me his efforts. I encouraged him, for I liked them. Moreover, he was soon to come into a little money, and the emigrants were counting on it.

I blustered: "What will you do in that slough over there? Did you come into the world to be a hewer of wood? Are you a farmer?"

He nodded and admitted my point.

"It will be the same all over the world. We workers may clear the primeval forests and cultivate the land, we may labour and slave, and in the end the State will come along and levy taxes; it will reduce us to subjection and take away what our labour has won — We shall meet with the same swindle everywhere! So I'd rather be a tramp in a more comfortable country —"

He fully agreed with me. We went to see the others. They received us with irritation. Schorsch wavered again. I was annoyed.

"You just go back to your morass of city life!" said Theo to me. I called him a coward for making his escape to the primeval forest.

"You might just as well set up a monastery, if you won't take up the struggle against our own countries," I blustered. We exchanged angry words, and parted with feelings of enmity.

Three days passed and I never left my room. I buried myself in Socialist literature to the best of my ability. I learnt a great deal in this way. It slowly dawned upon me that we must turn to the masses. As I read I frequently thought out vast schemes, and my blood ran hot and cold.

Schorsch did not come. I crept down to his mill. It was all shut up. I went up to Theo. Only Grete was there. She received me suspiciously.

"Where are the others?" I asked.

"Gone across the frontier to Italy," she replied curtly.

"Damn!" I snarled, and thought they had already started on their journey.

"Why don't you tell us what you have in mind?" asked Grete with annoyance.

"What do you suppose we have in mind?"

"Oh, all kinds of things! — You want to turn Schorsch against the plan, so that he may join you," she returned in the same tone.

"What has a revolutionary to do with Brazil, and the primeval forest?" I said sulkily.

"Oh, always the same old catchword," she snapped at me. I did not listen to her.

"When are they coming back?" I asked.

"In about a week," answered Grete.

"Oh Lord! To the devil with the lot!" I swore and left her.

A week passed by, and Theo and Schorsch came back. They had gone on foot as far as Milan. My friend was all for Brazil once more. It was now time for me to come to some decision. We took long walks, and I talked to Schorsch about his talent as an artist. We considered everything. Our comrades vegetated too much for our taste, they were too moral, too muddle-headed. And my debts grew daily more intolerable. No letters came, we were on the edge of the world, and knew nothing of what was going on in the cities. It was too quiet, too placid, too lacking in stimulus. Blue sky is not everything. After all!

"We'll go back to our morass. I'll make a present of all this fooling about nature to anyone that likes to take it! It's only good for Philistines who think of nothing but their insides, and guzzlers of grass! It's not life at all!" I said in disgust.

Schorsch nodded. He too hated this placid comfort. If at times we drank brandy and a great deal of wine, some of the anarchists raised a storm of indignation; if we smoked they said we were decadent.

We wanted to live, and it seemed that they only wanted to vegetate.

Brazil was no good to us. We went to Theo.

"There!" said Schorsch suddenly, and spat out his last mouthful of brandy, "now I'll tell you plainly: we're going back to the morass." He blurted it out with a show of feeling, and yet like a Philistine who has suddenly realized his own point of view. I nearly smiled.

Theo grew pale with anger. Then he smiled a scornful smile and turned to me.

"We're not Napoleons! Not even in imagination!" he mocked.

"Nor am I," I returned unmoved. After this there was a sense of alienation between us, a barrier.

Schorsch wrote for money to his brother, who held his property in trust. Nobody knew of our intention. I packed my boxes and took them secretly down to the mill. Schorsch had given up his work at the confectioner's in Locarno about a fortnight earlier. After a mad drinking-bout in a restaurant, we went at night to Jenke's house — the philosopher of the stomach — and bawled drinking songs. Then we looked for Theo and told him what we were going to do. Next day at midday he and Grete did not come to the station. We got in and the train started.

"There's a long life before us, and a merry, my lad," I said to Schorsch with relief, and he too breathed more freely.

We arrived in Munich on Whit Sunday. The next day I spent my last mark on getting home. Even in the town the people gaped at me. I was like a savage, long-haired and unwashed. I felt something of a stranger in civilized surroundings.

It was a glorious day. The vast arch of the clear sky spanned the Starnberg Lake. It all seemed so familiar, so near, as if I had never been away.

At Leoni I alighted from the steamer and climbed the hill. In the distance I saw two girls in their Sunday clothes accompanied by a well-dressed man. They laughed and chattered with noisy merriment. I came nearer, and suddenly the three exclaimed in chorus: "Mercy on us, it's Oskar! Oskar!" The laughter died on their lips, each one looked distressed, and they gazed at me round-eyed and amazed. They accompanied me to the village, standing round me so that, if possible, no one should see me. They were ashamed of me.

We entered a tiny cottage. Theresa and Emma had taken it and had Mother living with them. Max was married and living in our former house. Eugene had returned to America with his wife and children.

They received me like a Prodigal Son. Max sent word that I was not to show myself to him, or he would give me a good beating. Next day Maurus went to Munich with me and I took employment as a baker.

12

The Great Leap

WORK, AND SAVE, and to the devil once more, that was my idea. Only to get away! As far away as possible. No matter whither! Munich is a wretched hole! Away! Away!

I was vaguely aware that Jung was in Berlin, and that there literary activity was possible. Then there I would go! I wanted a complete change, something that would carry me altogether out of my present groove.

It was in this mood that I began work in Munich. It was a merely secondary concern, the means to an end.

Schorsch was attending an academy of art, and had set up a studio and engaged models. They robbed him and exploited him and fought in his studio. I seldom visited him. My hours of work were fairly long: from eleven o'clock in the evening till two o'clock the next day, and often longer still. When I got back to my room, I sat down and wrote stories till I fell asleep. I had lost touch with the anarchists. I had no time.

Maurus too was working in a Munich confectioner's at that time, and he made friends with Schorsch. Their relations were not happy. Maurus was cynical and bitter. He read a great deal, and had adopted the manner of an old and experienced man of the world. It is not surprising, that towards me he was suspicious about the least thing. Nevertheless, he visited me on Sundays and would say in a mocking voice: "I have been measured for a new suit, and have bought some new ties, and I have already saved nearly a thousand marks." He regarded me as a creature without will power or character, with whom it was unwise to have dealings. He cast the affair of

the three hundred marks in my teeth on every possible occasion. "I bear you no grudge," he generally ended, with an undercurrent of malice, "you are nothing to me. I don't care what happens to you. But old Schopenhauer is right: a man's character doesn't change—he saw deep when he said that." Then he smiled bitterly to himself, and continued his taunts: "And he says another fine thing, quite true—how does it go?—oh, yes—something like this: if once you had been deceived and trusted the deceiver even once afterwards, you would be throwing money out of the window. Aha! that's fine, that's really good!" He flung out his chest and laughed, and seemed to gloat over me because I could make no retort.

I was dead tired. He began to read aloud to me. My eyes would not keep open. He boasted of his hard work and all that he had endured, and said again: "Yes, yes, work—to earn money by one's own labours—oh, yes; oh, yes,—it's not so easy. Ha! ha!" And he left me. I borrowed books of him. He gave them to me. But he thought a great deal of his books. I forgot to return them at the proper time. I had borrowed a little money from him to make a start, and meant to pay it back when I had more. He was not unwilling to lend, but each time he worried me and said: "Oh, well—it's lost anyway—I know you—you're quick enough to move, if you've a chance of cheating someone else." At last I quarrelled at his irritating ways. I was furious, and for a time I held no communication with him. One day when I was asleep, he came and attacked me with an umbrella and then slipped quickly away. The break was complete. We did not meet again.

Schorsch spent all his money and one day returned to work as a confectioner. We only met on Sundays. Models came and borrowed money. We went for walks, and in the cafés we met some of our acquaintances again.

The journeyman at the bakery was a cunning man. He had a bloated face, small slit-eyes, and a sugary, falsetto voice. He behaved toward the master as with a comrade, for he had a little baker's shop and was hoping soon to become a master baker himself. He

was the type of man who may be described as trampling on those beneath and cringing to those above. When the master came home at midnight and looked into the bakery, the industrious journeyman always said: "Oh, Mr. Doll, we shall easily get through. You can go to bed with an easy mind. The stuff is nearly baked. At Ettaler's we always had three times as much, and there were only two of us — myself and the apprentice."

How should a master baker be other than pleased to hear such words? Mr. Doll replied promptly: "Oh, yes, that's right." He hiccuped once or twice, poked his finger up his nose, felt the fermenting dough, and said: "That's ready, it must be finished quickly. Don't let it sink," stood grinning for a minute or two, and went to bed. When he was gone the journeyman seized the dough and growled a few words of sulky annoyance, such as: "He must always find some fault," and threw the dough on to the bake-board. Then the scramble began. I weighed the pieces, and the apprentice put them in the cutting machine and spread them out for the head journeyman. Then we had to twist them into rolls and rings, and so on. Early in the morning the master came and helped us make rolls. I had to mix the various kinds of dough. When the master was there, the journeyman worked hard and drove us hard — the apprentice and me — and played the energetic workman. At night I often remarked casually that there was some fine slave-driving in this shop, and that our money was hard-earned, while the master was enjoying himself guzzling beer and roast pork.

"Do you know what Oskar has been saying to-night?" the journeyman would tell the master while they made the rolls.

"No, what?" asked the master eagerly without looking up from his work, and smiled spitefully to himself.

"That there's fine slave-driving at your place, and that to be a master is a soft job," the journeyman informed him in an innocent tone, and smiling superciliously he went on in a fawning voice: "It's just that he's not used to this kind of work and thinks you can be a master in the twinkling of an eye."

"Oh, yes, that's what young people are like nowadays. They

think that kind of thing is as easy as winking," the master responded and laughed his loud, beery laugh: "When I was young they worked eighteen hours a day in bakeries and earned a whole florin a week. In comparison with that, workmen today are perfect robbers!" And then the story of how he made his way generally followed. He was thick-set and stout and self-assured. Every now and then the journeyman nodded, as though he felt called upon to confirm what the master said. On such occasions I generally stared at them stupidly and swallowed my anger. When this lot of bread was ready it had to be delivered. I rode round to the various customers on a heavily laden bicycle till two o'clock. When I had done that, I went back to the bakery, scraped my troughs clean, emptied the flour into them, mixed the dough and set it to rise. Meanwhile the apprentice swept the bakery and kept constantly near me. He was a distant relative of the master and was expected to see that I took no bread away. At first I put my own allowance of bread aside without suspicion in the presence of the apprentice. It was customary to receive an allowance of half a pound a day. My share was as much as three pounds. The apprentice accused me. The master dropped spiteful hints. But why shouldn't I eat when I'm hungry, I thought; if I am to work hard, then I must eat a great deal. I was soon sick of the master's taunts. As it was not tolerated openly, I made off with the bread secretly.

"Go along and get me some cigarettes," I generally said to the apprentice shortly before I went, and while he was out, I stuffed my pockets full of bread and dressed. I met his searching glances coolly and disappeared.

When I was out in the street I cursed them for a pack of hypocrites, and reckoned how much money I had saved. I made cocoa in my room, ate a few rolls, and began to read, or wrote till I fell asleep. My landlady came in, shook me out of my sleep, and said sympathetically: "Do go to bed, Mr. Graf." I undressed, lay down, and slept like a log. The people of the house wakened me at nine in the evening, before they went to bed themselves. I got ready and went back to work.

Meanwhile I had bought myself a dove-grey suit, a pair of yellow gloves, and some shirts. I rejoiced over these acquisitions. I had earned them with the sweat of my brow, and treasured them the more for it.

One Sunday I went to see Schorsch again. He lived in a little studio in the back part of a house in Schwabing. When I had passed the corridor through the front part and looked up from the courtyard, I saw that the windows were open and two girls were beckoning and shouting loudly. One wore a chemise, the other was naked. An aeroplane humming in the sky had caught her attention. There was a terrific noise up above. I ran up the stairs and entered. The room looked like the battlefield after Sedan. Herring tins, packing-cases, and dirty pails were all about, and the table was covered with paint pots. There were combs lying about, and soiled cups all over the place, and the two models were dancing about as if they were crazy. Schorsch was sitting placidly on the sofa and painting a landscape; every now and then he laughed or shouted at the girls to be quiet. I was delighted with this Bohemian life. I made friends with the girls. We went for a walk. In the evening we went to the pictures, and then back to Schorsch's studio. Lollo made tea in a herring tin and asked me whether my shirts were as ragged as my friend's. I laughed. I did not think of sleep, and wanted to go straight on to work.

"You can't stay here any longer, you must go," said Schorsch resolutely to the girls.

"Of course, two girls can't stay with one gentleman," declared Lollo. Schorsch gazed at them helplessly.

"You must go," said Lollo to her rival. "I was here first." Schorsch sat by silent for a while. The girls quarrelled. Suddenly they began to fight, pulled each other's hair, and made a terrific row, till Schorsch rose and intervened.

"Put your things together and get along with you!" he warned them. The girls began to beg for indulgence. Lollo came to me: "You agree, don't you, Mr. Graf, that the one who has been here longest has the first claim." I nodded. Finally it was agreed that both should leave the next day. I had to go.

"How long are you going on slaving?" my comrade asked me at the outer door.

"Not much longer," I answered mechanically.

"Look out for clerical work," he returned.

"I must get right away from Munich. I want to go to Berlin — a fellow has more chance to do something there," I answered.

On the way home I reckoned how long I could hold out without work, and racked my brains for other means of earning a living. Everything was so hateful, so cramped!

It was already half past ten. I hurried to the shop. Weeks slipped by. The time passed heavily and aimlessly. I bought a lottery ticket. The result was to be declared in a week. The first prize was ten thousand marks. Salvation, I thought. A blank.

I sent sketches to various papers. They were all returned. I often met Lollo and lounged away the afternoons with her. I slept at night.

Away!

Away, I thought, away, as far as the train will carry me!

One day I met Morax. He told me that Jung had gone to Berlin and was living there. Already two books of his had been published.

Yes, Berlin, that's just it, I said to myself.

The apprentice had been telling tales on me again. All at once the master took to occupying himself in the bakery shortly before I went, and watching me. My anger rose.

By accident I spilt some hot alkaline solution over my hands. I had to stay away for a fortnight and received sick pay. But the master sent every third day to ask when I could start work again. When my hand was healed the journeyman sneered: "To lose a fortnight for a little thing like that!" The master was more reticent and only remarked from time to time: "Oh, yes, these modern young gentlemen! They *are* sensitive!"

Or he asked direct: "What did you live on that fortnight?" So that's the way the wind's blowing, I thought, and said innocently: "Oh, well, one does save a few odd pennies when one is always at work."

"A little splash of alkali isn't so bad, if you can get a long

holiday," said the journeyman jocularly, while we were twisting the rolls, and the master laughed.

I went on working calmly. "Three or four more weeks' wages and I'll chuck the whole thing," I thought.

"You're a nice pair of sneaks," I said one night to the journeyman and the apprentice. "You tell the master everything, and he laughs up his sleeve at our dissensions. He profits by them."

"What? — Who said so? — What do you mean?" blustered the journeyman and reddened, for I had struck home.

I swept aside his protest, with a wave of my hand, and answered: "I have no more to say; I think what I think."

"We've worked together so long, and now you are beginning to find fault," whined the journeyman hypocritically, and added: "I certainly shall do nothing to injure you."

"All right, all right," I said bitterly, and was silent.

The journeyman grew angrier and redder. "If you like, we will have it out."

"Right," I said, ready for a fight. Our work proceeded in silence.

It was a Saturday night, so that there was more than usual to be done. After I had baked the rolls and while I was waiting for the twists to rise, I took advantage of my comparative leisure to get my troughs ready. I ran down to the cellar, fetched up tub after tub of flour, and emptied them into the trough. Meanwhile the apprentice sat idly by and ate his supper. The rolls were already baked.

"Oskar! Come along and make the twists," shouted the journeyman. I ran down to the cellar to fetch the last tub of flour.

"Just coming, I only want to fetch one more tub," I called as I ran downstairs. The sweat was dripping from my body.

"Come along!" shouted the journeyman.

"Tell Andreas to hurry up!" was my hasty answer from below.

"Come along!" came the threatening cry. I dashed up the steps with my tub of flour, ran to the trough, and emptied the flour into it.

Then I felt blows. I hurled the tub with all my strength at the journeyman, so that it was smashed. The apprentice screamed in

terror. I was in a whirl of fury, in a tremor, and there was no stopping now. I stormed. Dripping with blood, the journeyman made at me again. I bellowed and seized the shovel, and now I was all for death and murder. The journeyman retreated into the bakery. I hurled the lamp down, rushed forward in the darkness, and hit out at everything without pause or discrimination. The bake-boards were smashed, the lye spurted from the tubs, the trestles collapsed with a crash. The two in the lavatory yelled at the top of their voices. I battered at the door and smashed the window. Dough and dirt were splashing round me. To bits with everything! But the door was bolted and too strong. I shouted and roared through the broken window. "Scoundrels! Dogs! I'll do for you!" The pair whined: "You're mad." I struck the door again with the shovel, so that a board crashed in. The pair inside shouted me down, and the household was roused. All at once I saw the master baker's whole family standing whimpering. Other tenants were standing alarmed in the passage. The master baker raised his candle and lighted up the devastated bakery, and when he saw all his twists lying in the dirt, he was overcome and began to cry like a child: "Oh dear, oh dear, for the Lord's sake, Oskar, you're mad. Just look, it's all ruined! — Can't you be quiet! Quiet! — It's all ruined, oh Lord!"

"Come who dares! I'll kill anyone!" I yelled madly and went on shouting: "Rotters! Good-for-nothing bums! I'm off! I'm off at once!" Again I flung myself at the lavatory door: "Open, or I'll smash everything to atoms! Open, I'm off at once, I'm off! Give me out my clothes!" The whole courtyard was screaming. They threw me my clothes through the broken window, and I caught them and dressed. No one dared to come near me.

"He's gone mad. They must take him to an asylum!" the two captives screamed all the time. Nobody listened to them, everybody was groaning and bewailing.

"Well — that's got to be paid for!" whined the master baker's wife.

"For all I care!" I bawled at her, flung off my apron, and

prepared to go. The people shrank back in terror and made a passage through which I ran.

Out in the streets day was dawning. The houses towered above me in sleepy gloom. I was dripping with perspiration, spattered with soot, and filthy all over. I rushed blindly along and went in search of Schorsch. He was still in bed. When he opened the door, he almost started back.

"Now I've made an end with it!" I said, and dropped into a chair. Then, after a short pause, I told him what had happened. He shook his head and merely said: "That may let you in for something, if the master chooses to be nasty." I did not listen.

"You'd better disappear from Munich for a time," my friend resumed. I nodded sleepily.

"Go to Berlin," said Schorsch again. "It's ten times better there for literary folks. And Jung is there, too."

That settled it. I washed and Schorsch got ready. When we went out into the sunny street, my mood was one of untrammelled freedom. I stepped out light-heartedly, as if I had succeeded after a prolonged struggle in escaping from a sea of slime. After a walk we had dinner at a tavern and made all preparations for my departure.

And once again, as formerly to Locarno, I set out into the dark night at ten o'clock. As I stood at the carriage window, which rattled with the roaring and vibration of the train, I suddenly burst into exclamations of joy.

Away! Away! Far away! The words sang in my heart, and my blood surged.

"Berlin! Berlin!" The rails beat out the rhythm, and the city rose in my imagination like an unknown miracle, a mighty cathedral.

13

Hospitality

I ARRIVED IN BERLIN with three marks and twenty pfennigs. I had only a vague idea what I meant to do. I had Jung's address, and took some time to find him. At last I reached him, settled with him, and went drinking with him. I made all manner of new acquaintances. There were constant arguments among the people we knew. Psychoanalysis was the current creed, mixed with all kinds of social ideas. I came in contact with the literature of the young generation. I was terribly awkward, and people hardly knew what to make of me. I got on pretty badly. I hunted up various people and got money or food. As I gradually grew accustomed to my surroundings, I began to write again, published verses in various journals, and drank perpetually with Jung, Oehring, and several others who joined us casually. When money ran short we went foraging. I grew skilful, went to people and told them that Jung and the rest of us had been arrested for cheating some publican, and borrowed money for the others. In the end I became universally known. People avoided me when they could. For instance, when I appeared in the Café of the West they looked at me and laid their heads together, and once I heard the word: "The cadging genius."

Outwardly I was reduced to a pitiful condition, dirty and ragged; and wherever I went I felt embarrassed. I soon quarrelled with Jung and his wife, and went to sleep at Oehring's, whose father was an official in the telegraph service. When I rang, the old gentleman generally came himself, cast a hurried glance at me, left me standing where I was, and called out: "Richard! The criminal!"

This man hated me from the first. One day when I was again sleeping with Richard, the old fellow suddenly began to storm in the next room. In a trembling, emotional voice he blustered: "I am like Samson! I am supporting the pillars of the house! But some day I shan't be able to support them any longer, and then the whole fabric will fall to ruin!"

He always played on the emotions. He regarded Jung and me as having led his two sons astray. When we were in Richard's room we heard his voice wailing next door: "Exposed to corruption, unprotected! Unprotected! My sons, the joy of my life!"

He was a lean old man, with grey hair, whose nerves had been worn out by his long years of service. His wife was paralysed, and sat all day in a tall arm-chair by the window. Richard and Fred were students, but for the most part they idled away their time in literary circles and wrote verses.

Jung helped me in all manner of ways, though we never really understood each other. When we got into an argument I generally glowered at him stupidly, because I did not understand anything he said. Then he lost his temper and called me "fool" and "idiot." He speculated on the exchange, directed correspondence bureaux, and edited a trade paper. When I was at home with his wife I was expected to sing Bavarian songs to her, or we went to a café and lay in wait for people with money. There were often violent scenes at Jung's. The two came to blows. They blamed me as the cause of their quarrels. After an outburst like this, Jung and I generally went away and drank for two or three days. I had broken all my home ties and clung to Jung. At last he and I quarrelled. For a time I went secretly and slept at Richard Oehring's and attached myself to the two brothers. Time passed by in futile idleness. I was dissatisfied, disgusted. We often attended anarchist meetings or spent our days in noisy amusements. Nothing happened. I borrowed money from Richard and went to look for a room. I wanted to be alone, to be my own master, and to set about something or other.

The news of the Sarajevo murder shook the world. Dispatches announced Russia's mobilization; then Germany's. A tremendous outburst of rejoicing set the streets in a fever. Everything was in a

whirl. Mobs collected, the barracks were full of volunteers. Motor cars full of officers rushed along the streets, hailed with cries of enthusiasm. Motor vans heavily laden with military equipment, boots, and helmets clattered past. The people collected and attacked a café with a foreign name, and smashed everything to bits. In one square the rabble, yelling, hunted down a man, killed him, and sang: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!" Grey regiments wound along the streets, greeted on all sides by jubilant crowds, by citizens and elegant gentlemen and ladies. The rush and hurry was terrible. Day and night the air was humming with patriotic songs and with the most gruesome tales of spies and of the first encounter with the enemy.

"Now we're in for it!" I said.

"Everything will be wiped out," said Jung.

The intellectuals in the Café of the West were dumbfounded. At one stroke everything that had been so important yesterday had ceased to be. Everything was in suspense. Countless men volunteered. Nobody quite knew why.

"This is a nice state of affairs. We must join the Betoneurs," said Jung. He was desperate. I did not understand the word, did not understand him, and gazed at him stupidly. I went to Oehring. The old telegraph official received me literally with open arms: "Come in! Now, in this hour, let us put aside all personal differences. We are Germans! Germans! Come in!" And this time he led me into the parlour, where Richard and Fred were sitting by their mother. Such a thing had never happened before. The table was loaded with dishes and big boxes of cigars and cigarettes. The two brothers looked at me in embarrassment.

"I stand behind you with the last drop of my blood, my sons, my all!" cried the old man, and pointing to me: "Here is Mr. Graf too, going to volunteer at the very outset. We cherish our country deep within our hearts." He raised his wineglass and his voice almost sang as he exclaimed: "With God's blessing, here's to you and our King, to our country and our honour!"

At first I stared, then I could hardly refrain from laughter. None the less, I could not throw off secret uneasiness. I did not know what

was the matter. But something paralysed every decision that one wanted to make.

The telegraph official gave his two sons money and we withdrew. I was now altogether stupefied. The two went to the Wrangel Barracks to volunteer. I was growing uncomfortable. What was I doing there? I saw countless volunteers standing in the courtyard of the barracks. Every face was beaming. I said to Richard: "This bores me, you know! If they want me, they'll fetch me. I'm not going to run after them!"

We had lost Fred in the crowd. For a time we whistled for him in vain, then we left and went to look for Jung.

"What's the whole mess got to do with me! I shall go back to baking," I said as we walked along. Richard did not know what to say.

"And anyway! If I've got to be a soldier, I'd rather join the Bavarians," I resumed.

"That's hardly possible now," said Richard.

"Why not?" I asked disconcerted.

"All the trains are commandeered to transport troops. You can't get to Munich now," he answered.

I went to Jung and asked what I had better do.

"Volunteer — It'll be a fine show. Liège has already fallen. It'll go like clock work," he replied. And again he said: "Paris will fall in less than no time." He wanted annihilation; destruction for himself and all the world. He was a new man.

The streets were in an uproar. One victory after another proclaimed itself in the heavy type of the placards. The ground burned under my feet. I heard that one could volunteer for service with other Federal States. I went to the police station at Wilmersdorf and volunteered for the Third Infantry Regiment in Augsburg. They gave me a form to use as a railway ticket. I rushed to Jung's, packed my possessions, drove to the Anhalt Station, got into a train, and reached Munich after a four day's journey. I never thought of reporting in Augsburg. There was plenty of time. I wanted to go home, to see Schorsch, and to wait and see what turned up.

The journey across half Germany was beautiful, almost like an idyll of the wars of freedom. At all the stations people from the Red Cross met us and stuffed us with good food. The carriages were littered with scraps of bread, bits of sausage, and crumbs of cheese.

Anyway it's pleasant enough, there's plenty of food in time of war it seems, I thought, and recalled the stories that my father had told me of the campaign in 1870-71.

Munich was as silent as the grave. It was almost a relief. There were no mobs — true, it was the middle of August by now — the trams were running as usual, people were walking in the streets, Tietz's Stores were still standing, and the Law Courts.

I went to Schorsch's mother and asked after him. He had gone to Augsburg as a cook, but now he was in hospital, she told me. I was dog tired and went to find a model, and slept there. I knew that Max, my eldest brother, had joined up long ago. I did not want to meet Maurus. So I could go home. On the third day I stood at our open kitchen door and laughed aloud: "Well, now there's a good row on. It'll be first-rate!" Max's wife was there, the children were loafing about, and Theresa, Emma, and Mother had gone back to the old house, so that they might all help one another. They all hung their heads and expected something terrible. My mother's face was calm; she puckered her brow and said, neither sadly nor cheerfully: "Oh, yes — I remember how the men went out in '70 — no good never comes of it."

"What about you?" asked my sisters.

"Me? — They'll fetch me fast enough. I'm not going to run after them," I said.

I had to report to the mayor, and shortly afterwards I was sent to Munich to enroll. "Convoy," was the word of command. Many of the village people laughed at me.

On December, 1st, 1914, I had to report at the artillery barracks in Munich. We were taken to the equipment room, received our uniforms and boots and other appurtenances, and that was how it began.

14

Soldiering

OUR ROOM WAS FINE ENOUGH. Forty-five of us put up there with a non-commissioned officer. During the first few days there was constant variety. At last, when we were completely fitted out, we entered the courtyard of the barracks. Drill.

Our non-commissioned officer was a dumpy little man, as round as a bullet, and, moreover, an ornithologist, or, in everyday language, a seller of birds. His manner was sharp, and we learned well under him. But I could not help laughing at the slightest provocation, which was apt to annoy him intensely.

"Why are you always laughing?" he shouted at me. I laughed still more, without knowing why.

"Have you come from a lunatic asylum?" His voice shook. I could not help laughing still more. He told me to stand aside. So long as the drill continued I stood there and looked on. Sometimes the corporal cast a threatening glance at me, but I could not help myself, the little fellow was so comical in his rage. If you looked only at his head, and saw it getting redder and redder, it resembled a sausage swollen like a child's balloon. His little cap looked as if it were glued to the top of his head.

Next day we began to learn the different salutes. We had to march round the corporal with the goose-step and salute him—hand raised to the forehead and eyes turned towards him. I laughed again at the sausage. The corporal swore. I laughed louder. He stormed at me. I laughed still more and could hardly stand straight.

"Back again!" roared the officer. It was no good. I went on laughing. Once at school we had to make up a sentence containing

the word "bounce." I came out with: "We put short, fat people on the table and bounce them up and down." I imagined something like the familiar sport of making frogs jump, a game at which we sometimes played. Now, as I marched round, I could not get this childish fancy out of my head. I literally saw the officer's bullet head bounce up in the air and suddenly burst with a bang.

I was sent back again and again, and yet again, and had to march past the corporal, my hand raised to salute, my eyes turned towards him. My laughter swelled to a roar. The corporal jumped up, he blustered and spluttered. Then all at once I dropped helpless with laughter, kept my hand to my forehead, and gazed at the corporal, who was furious but at his wit's end. Everyone laughed. The corporal took out his note-book and put down my name.

"Step aside!" he yelled.

At roll-call I was reported to the captain.

"Why are you always laughing?" he asked in a peremptory tone.

"Excuse me, captain, I've always been like that from a child," I answered respectfully. The captain shook his finger at me and growled:

"You wait! You with your childish laughter! We'll cure you of that in a dark cell."

"Oh," I said stupidly. Then the captain began to bellow, and swore at me violently. He turned argumentatively to the sergeant-major and said: "We'll send the fellow across for three days. Make a note of it."

After roll-call, when we were cleaning our boots and brushing our clothes, the corporal came from duty and shouted at the door: "Graf! Out you come!" I ran to answer his call. He told me to take off my apron and follow him. I did so. We went straight to the kitchen. There I was given two rolls of army bread, and was then taken across to the cells. The corporal was blustering all the way, asking if I had no idea how to behave, and saying I was a disgrace to the whole company of recruits.

When I was presented to the sergeant-major in charge of the cells, he scanned me contemptuously and said to the corporal: "A raw

pup." Then the corporal left me. The sergeant-major recited to me the rules of conduct under arrest, took me up to the first tier, and shut me into a cold, dark cell. Three days of bread and water in that hole gave me an opportunity to reflect.

Why do they lock me up, I kept on thinking, when they need men? Why was my "Oh!" a crime? It was cold, and dull, and unprofitable, this languishing in a cell. When I get out, I resolved, I will ask straightway to be sent to the front. They're sure to have something better to do with us there than lock us up.

The day after my release I had to sweep the non-commissioned officers' quarters and clean their boots.

When my comrades passed they laughed at me uneasily. I laughed too, but I felt plainly that nobody was really well-disposed toward me now.

The next day at five in the morning I was sent to the stable. The corporal showed me everything that I had missed during three days, and somehow I felt myself cut off from the others. Fool, I thought, fool, now they've got their eye on you and are sure to put all the most disagreeable work on you. But after a few days the corporal ceased to watch me, and I was treated like the rest.

One day when we were in the stable and were in the middle stall getting ready for our duties, one of the older men, who seemed to have long experience at the job, winked at me and said: "Come here." He took me by the arm and whispered again: "Don't be such a fool and wear yourself to bits, lad!" We were standing on the steps leading to the hayloft. The middle stall was almost dark, and was used for dressing and undressing. The old man beckoned silently and I followed him up to the hayloft.

"It was you, wasn't it, that was clapped in the cells on the very first day?" asked the old man when we were up there alone. I nodded silently.

"Just listen," he then advised me, "the corporal has a liking for people who are brisk and on the spot, and if you manage cleverly, you can clear your character and get back into his good books. Look, there is the opening through which they throw down the hay.

When the corporal calls out: "Down with the hay!" push open the trap-door and throw the bundles, ready tied up, down into the stable till he calls: "Stop!" Then shut the trap-door and come down again into the stable. You can do that every day, beginning to-morrow, and after that sleep up here till it is time to go out riding."

I saw quickly what he meant, and right enough, when I heard the cry of: "Down with the hay!" while my comrades downstairs were running out of the stalls I was already throwing down the bundles of hay. The astonished corporal stood below and laughed with satisfaction, calling to the others: "I like that, there's go in him, he gets on with his job." After that, I was in his good books for a long time. But one day when it was time for drill I was absent, and my absence was discovered. The corporal said to the others: "He's an impudent lad, that young fellow!" and thenceforward kept a sharp eye on me. Since I was still unable to restrain my laughter, I was put with horses that bit and kicked, and set to groom them. I went to the corporal, stood at attention, and said innocently:

"Please sir, may I leave the ranks?"

"Quick then!" he said. I hurried out and went to the canteen. That was discovered too, and thenceforward I had to sweep his room after hours and clean the boots of all twenty corporals. I had to do additional drill, because I still laughed, or peel potatoes in the kitchen, after I had done the sweeping, till twelve o'clock. There was plenty to eat in the kitchen, and I quickly made friends with all the cooks, and so got the largest helping at dinner and was in their good books too.

I was given a very spirited horse to ride, who liked to throw me. I enjoyed that. I was a fairly good horseman and was never in disfavour at the riding lessons. And I laughed cheerily every time I was thrown, and mounted again with redoubled enjoyment. The corporal was pleased and said to those who showed fear: "Look at that fellow! He's not afraid, and that's why he's some good at it! You've got to be bold if you're going to ride, men!"

Just wait, I thought, I'll pay you back for your bullying, and I

kept on tickling and fretting my horse just when everything was going well. And sure enough—the animal planted his hind feet firmly, reared angrily, and threw me neatly on the thick carpet of shavings, which flew in all directions. Or he threw me forwards, just as I chose.

“My good fellow!” blustered the corporal, unable to suppress his laughter. “My good fellow! You’ll spoil the whole review! Quick! Up you get! Quick!”

Not so fast, I thought to myself, I’ll get even with you for the sweeping and potato-peeling. Then came the review before the captain. Right in the middle of a fine trot I tickled my horse and up I flew. The whole thing was spoiled. The corporal was rebuked, and after that I was sent down to the coal cellar. There I worked with an old man who made a show of intimacy with the sergeant and was always having snacks, the first at nine in the morning, and a second at eleven; then came dinner, a third at two o’clock, and the last between half past three and five. After that we were off duty. It was a pleasant life.

“You can’t do better than report yourself for service at the front as quickly as possible, I tell you that,” advised the old man. “There are heaps of soft jobs out there, if a man knows how to get them.”

I went straight to the corporal and said with an assumed air of soldierly zeal: “Excuse me, sir, when a transport is going to the front, I would like to be sent with it.”

The corporal scanned me severely and said in a discouraging tone: “Just wait, young fellow, I’ll find a job for you that’ll cure you of your impudence! You’ll never have such a soft time again as you have in the cellar, mind that! Your turn will come, you just wait.”

The old fellow in the cellar laughed when I told him what had happened and said with an air of superior knowledge: “It’s not half as bad as that! No one can play tricks on you there.” Then we returned to the canteen. And so the days passed by.

“Who said the other day that he wanted to go to the front?” the corporal called at our door a few weeks afterwards with his eye on

me. I stepped forward immediately. Several others pressed forward too.

"I only want two," the corporal commanded. He accepted me, and asked: "Who else wants to come?" and took stock of the others. Another baker called Dreier came with me. A lieutenant of the Engineers received us in the corridor.

"Report yourselves at three o'clock in the orderly room of the Railway battalion," he said.

We were given new uniforms and went to the office in question, were told to fetch two horses from the collecting station, and henceforward we belonged to the Railway battalion. For the few days that remained before we set out for the front, we had a good time, lounged about, went drinking in the town, and gave ourselves superior airs towards our barracks-mates. At last on the fifth day we were sent for again, to go to the Engineers orderly room, were presented to a major, and ordered to pack our things, and that night at eleven we travelled with the staff of the Railway battalion (that was the unit to which we were attached) to Insterburg on the East Prussian frontier.

There were eight of us and two officers, the major and the first lieutenant, whom I have already mentioned. We alighted at Insterburg. We had to take the staff baggage into the town and were allotted quarters in the barracks. It was the depth of winter and the snow lay thick on the ground. We had hardly anything to do: only a little grooming and policing every day. For the rest of our time we lounged about the town, which had only recently been evacuated by the Russians and was the worse for its experiences. Notices posted up by the enemy commander, General Rennenkampf, were still sticking to the walls of the houses. The people in a general way were neither well nor ill disposed towards the military; it seemed rather that they were sick of the whole affair. There was real white bread to be bought, and cheap sausages. The barracks, which we shared with East Prussian Reservists, were full of lice.

15

Done For

AT THAT TIME I had a curious habit of asking everybody almost automatically in the midst of a conversation: "I say, how old are you?" I have been the victim of such unmannerly habits from childhood. For instance, as a boy I used for a time to burst out on every possible occasion, suitable and unsuitable, with the phrase: "Forty-thousand marks, oh, that's a grand sum!" and once my father, who hardly ever beat me, gave me a good box on the ear for it. But still the exclamation would escape me, again and again, till one day another took its place. Enough.

In Insterburg every third day we had to line up for roll-call in the corridor at our headquarters. The first lieutenant gave the command, and the major came and inspected each man sharply from head to foot, found fault with badly polished boots or slovenly carriage, threatened arrest, and that was the end. We went to the kitchen, ate, lounged idly about the town, came home again, and played cards till far into the night. Our staff occupied a floor in a deserted private house, and we had to stay in the kitchen during the day, take telegrams to the post office every now and then, and run various messages. Almost every day the two officers drove in a car to the front and did not return till late at night; sometimes indeed it was not till midday on the following day. However deep the snow was, they went just the same, and the two chauffeurs grumbled and swore. Then we who stayed behind could do as we liked; we got into all kinds of mischief, and were often at a loss how to kill time. There was Peperl, the clerk, who afterwards became our corporal, there were the two officers' orderlies, Einhart and Hartig, and we

privates of the Train. Peperl, whose real name was Schwedes, was a young surveyor's assistant from Lower Bavaria, had passed his examination as a one year volunteer, and was full of zeal. He was supposed to be in control in the absence of the officers, but no one took any notice of him. His appearance indeed did not command respect; he had pouting lips and chubby red cheeks, was barely twenty-two, and his speech was obstructed by too long a tongue. We generally called him "wet drawers," for he was very timid. A rough word from anyone frightened him. We passed him over with a smile, and when anything went wrong and we were called to account by the officers, we cursed him. We always put the blame on him, and that reduced him to utter confusion. He grinned and began to whine: "I can't help it! — I told you so, but you never listen to me!" But we all shouted at him and cursed him savagely: "That's nothing to do with it — You're our corporal! — You let us in for it, you fool! — You're a nice fellow! — We won't forget it! — Just wait, next time there's trouble we'll leave you in the lurch!" This drove him to despair. He whimpered and literally cried. He was as soft as cotton-wool, and did whatever we told him.

Somewhere about the seventeenth day of our sojourn in Insterburg a cask of rum was unexpectedly sent us from the depot. It contained fifteen liters. We sat down at once and began to drink. Again and again we filled our field cups. Our play became more animated. The major's servant flung down his cards and reeled to the tap, where he put his head under the stream of cold water.

"Aha!" sneered the first lieutenant's orderly, and he too threw down his cards. I took a great draught, snorted like a horse, and stared fixedly at somebody: "I say, how old are you?" My tongue was stiff and my head dizzy.

"What fellows you are, bowled over by a drop of brandy," blustered the adjutant's orderly, filled his cup, and gulped it down at a single draught. My comrade, Dreier, laughed noisily.

"I sa-ay, ho-ow old are you-ou?" I hiccuped.

"Idiot! What for do you want to go on asking that like a donkey?"

Just ask the major how old he is, you fool!" shouted the first lieutenant's orderly, and went on: "We've had enough of your monkey tricks."

Dreier burst out laughing again. The major's orderly clung limply to the splashing tap.

"He's hanging already," said Dreier indifferently. The other man at the table lifted his can to his lips again and gulped noisily. All at once he lay on the floor like a dog and there was a sound like a death-rattle in his throat. Dreier got up and reeled to the tap, filled his cup, and emptied it over the face of the drunken man, who gulped and twitched, but remained lying on the floor.

"The spokesman," I hiccuped, and stared into vacancy, puckered my brow and suddenly opened my eyes wide to test myself. It was all right still. I still saw everything, Dreier at the tap again and Einhart, the major's orderly, clinging to it, and Hartig gurgling on the floor.

"Come on, turn off the tap and leave the other two; drink, drink!" I bawled to Dreier.

"Drink," said he, back at the table again, and took a huge gulp from his cup. We stared at one another with glassy eyes.

"But I say, how old are you?" The words slipped once more from my brandy-soaked mouth.

"Good Lord! You crazy dog!" shouted Dreier, and shaking his head heavily, he laughed. Hartig was sick, and Dreier bent down and gave him a shove. "Here, you fellow, get up!" Peperl, who had drunk least, stood by shaking with fear and kept on saying: "Oh, if the major comes! If the major comes!"

"Good Lord! Good Lord! How drunk a man can get," growled Dreier. I sat glued to my chair and rumbled in a deep voice: "Drink, boys, drink!"

"I'm going! I'm going!" cried Peperl, and left the kitchen.

All of a sudden the door was thrown open and both officers appeared. Einhart groaned, Hartig was sick again and again, Dreier stood unsteadily by the fireplace and glowered. I had pulled myself up and staggered to the major, fell helplessly on his breast, and

bawled in a drunken voice: "O-oh, I say, sir, how old are you?" and hiccuped.

An awful yell smote upon my ears. The major pushed me away in disgust. Then the two chauffeurs seized hold of me.

Next morning I found myself in my bed next to Dreier in the barracks. We stared at each other in amazement. The two chauffeurs were quarrelling loudly with Peperl, who was almost in tears: "You ought to have known! — It's all your fault! You're the responsible officer!" They swore roundly and told us what had happened. Peperl collapsed on the bench and groaned: "I always have to stand the racket, even when I couldn't stop you!"

"Come, come," said Dreier, and suddenly began to laugh. The chauffeurs jumped up indignantly and began to abuse us. I lay on my straw mattress utterly stupefied, and said nothing at all. Only it dawned upon me that this time we should get well punished.

"We shall have to pay for this," stormed the little chauffeur angrily, "all of us, not only you!" Peperl suddenly stood up and said resolutely: "I shall ask to be transferred. I can never be a corporal here." Then he left us.

"We're done for now, I tell you," snapped the elder chauffeur in his nasal Viennese dialect, "and anyway, that sort of thing's not done when a fellow knows the others will suffer for it too!"

At midday there was a great to-do and on this occasion the major began for the first time to doubt my sanity, for he came up to me in a threatening manner and said: "It is as if a lunatic had been smuggled into the German army. We've picked up a fine fellow!" Each of us concerned in the affair got twenty-seven days' light field punishment. None of us understood why. The major's servant got three days' close arrest in addition for a mere trifle. Shortly afterwards we went to Gumbinnen, then to Lötzen, to Hindenburg's headquarters, and finally we arrived at Marggrabowa, close to the frontier. While we were at Gumbinnen our staff had been considerably enlarged. Prussian soldiers were added, an office was established, and at Lötzen there were seventeen of us. The adjutant was changed, and a lieutenant from Munich arrived with a new orderly.

The Viennese chauffeur was replaced by an honest Mannheimer. It was summer time. We could bathe, and Dreier and I had hardly anything to do. The lieutenant seldom went riding, so I saddled his chestnut horse every morning and rode all over the country till midday. I did my best to avoid the officers. But if I did happen to come across them, there was generally trouble. I was altogether done for. I did not show my face at all. My mates were alarmed and attended to my duties for me.

At Marggrabowa I got dysentery, was sent to the collecting station, and thence to the reserve hospital at Goldap. I refused all medicine, and the doctor threatened me with "back to the front again," which I should have liked well enough. I was sent to report at the Lines of Communication Commandant's office when I was only half recovered.

"Where do you belong?" asked the lieutenant doing duty there. I named my unit. The man did not listen. "Your regiment went to the Carpathians long ago. Where is your depot unit?"

"In Munich!"

I was given a pass and travelled home by the next train, passing through Berlin. I got out there, wanting to see my friends. Jung was at the front, and so were the two Oehring. I only saw Clara, Richard's friend. She was delighted and found a lodging for me. I stayed three days. During my stay I went to see Oehring's father. He had grown older — very old. He opened the door wide and received me with a hearty handshake, led me into the parlour, and brought food and cigars. I got news of my friends from him. Alfred Lichtenstein had been killed. Fred Oehring was a prisoner. The old man hung his head sadly. His paralysed wife cowered in her chair by the fire, more shrivelled than ever. She did not speak at all, only stared dully into space.

"Yes, indeed, this war ——" I said.

"This war," the old man interrupted with returning animation, "has brought out the essentials. It will be the salvation of German youth." And on the moment he towered up and gesticulated as in former days: "Destiny makes us great! Many enemies, much

honour! We at home are heart and soul with our lion-hearted boys standing in the thick of the battle, crowned with victory!" He began to tremble and tears coursed down his cheeks. He pressed my hand warmly and gave me a packet of the best Havanas.

"Brave soldier," he said, "take this little gift as a modest token of gratitude for your heroism," and his voice trembled with emotion again. "Ah, some day — God grant it — my heroes will sit in this room once more!" He glanced at his sick wife, who sat motionless. "And thankful parents will listen to their stories, drinking from a fountain of youth and strength!" He was sobbing now without disguise or constraint; he pressed my hand again as a farewell greeting and groaned: "And so let us hope that Germany will bring healing to the whole world!"

I gazed at him, I gazed at his wife. Strange, strange indeed, I thought. His words seemed to come from another world, of which I had never had any conception. I was deep in thought as I walked out into the street.

In Munich the sergeant-major in the orderly-room was dumb-founded and said to me: "What, you back again already?"

"Yes, sir," I said. I saw that the good fellow respected me, for he had never seen anything of the world beyond Munich.

"Go to the doctor and get yourself examined," he ordered, for he was afraid I might spread dysentery. I was declared to need thorough rest and was given leave of absence at once. I went home. Many things were changed there — My brother, Max, had been killed, my sister Emma was dying of consumption, and our old house now belonged to the strange wife and children of my dead brother. My mother and sisters were already thinking of moving back to the smaller house where they had lived before.

Maurus had not yet been called, and was still employed as a confectioner in Munich. Nanny was learning hair-dressing in the city. I did not visit either of them.

There was an atmosphere of mutual hostility in the house. One could see that the *ménage* could not last long as it was. I did not know what to do with myself in the place, and every day increased

my sense of constraint. My mother toiled and moiled all day long as usual. She baked the bread now, for there was no journeyman. Her hair was already sprinkled with grey. Every now and then she dropped into a chair, utterly exhausted, and groaned: "Oh, this hateful war! — Maxl is dead and everything has passed into new hands — I have slaved for thirty-five years, and now I'm not wanted —"

She looked weary and embittered. The younger woman was lazy and went about with an air of bereavement. She grew fatter every day.

When my leave of absence expired I reported again at the orderly-room of my unit, was re-examined at the urgent request of the anxious sergeant-major, and sent to the military hospital at Oberwiesenfeld. They said I had an internal chill. Schorsch, who was regarded as fit for garrison duty and was under the District Command, visited me several times. He read the papers, and when we argued he always said: "It will go on for years, you'll see."

"Then we shall all be mercenaries and robbers and murderers — That's all right," I said. What did I care for tomorrow and after tomorrow!

I presented myself once more at the orderly-room and was received solemnly by the sergeant-major. He asked how I was and inquired: "Do you want to return to your regiment? Your major has just written to us." I was delighted at the idea of returning to my former mates, was given a fresh uniform, and left the same night. Fortunately, I was handed over to a troop-train going east, with instructions to deliver me at Marggrabowa. My inexperience at railway travelling might easily have landed me somewhere quite different. It had been the same on my journey back from the front: I just trusted to luck and the train, and always followed the crowd that talked of Berlin or Munich.

Nevertheless, misfortune overtook me. We stopped at Schwandorf and I went to the lavatory. While I was there the train with its passengers started again. I ran to the station-master in great excitement and reported myself. Telegrams were sent, and the whole

troop-train had to wait for me at Marktredwitz. The platoon commander, who was a sub-veterinary surgeon, raised hell and threatened all manner of penalties. But I was not intimidated in the least, for I did not consider myself under his command; I was simply a passenger. I said impudently: "I'm not under your control."

The veterinary surgeon was furious and bellowed like mad: "What! — You just wait! You won't forget me! I'll report you to your staff officer! We'll see."

I stared at him boldly and went into the carriage. He tried to annoy me for the rest of the journey, but seemed really to have accepted the view that I was responsible to no one beyond myself. He regarded me with bitter hostility but did nothing to injure me. I indeed was convinced that when the major heard the story he would lock me up at once, but I did not much care. Curiously enough, however, the veterinary gentleman seemed to forget the whole affair on our arrival.

I found our staff comfortably settled and much enlarged. Of the original men there only remained Dreier, Peperl, and the little chauffeur. The first lieutenant had fallen out with the major, I heard. He and his orderly were transferred to the western front, and a very smart lieutenant took his place.

16

"Special Service"

SEVERAL DAYS PASSED without much notice being taken of me. Then I was employed as an orderly, and had to sit in the office and take telegrams to the post. I generally stayed out a long time, though the post office was hardly ten minutes walk away. I was much more interested in the tea-rooms, the racial types, and the ruined houses. I hunted in the disordered rooms, nosed out books, and read them. Nobody enquired for me. Nobody seemed to have any use for me. The major's orderly fell ill and he needed another. Everyone held off. Nobody wanted to take the post and be locked up for every trifle.

Peperl came to me and said solemnly: "Graf, you'll have to be the major's orderly. Get ready and go up to him. But don't pretend to be such a fool, or you will disgrace us all and I shall have to pay the piper again."

I did as I was told, dressed, and went to the major.

"At your service, sir—excuse me, I am to be your orderly," I said and stood at attention, my hands on the seams of my breeches.

The major scanned me and drawled: "Ye-es." I stood there for a moment, uncertain what to do, and then stuttered:

"I should like to say, sir, that I'm no good at it. I have never filled such a post."

"Then you'll just have to learn," said the major curtly, and dismissed me. I went downstairs, lay on my mattress, and continued to read. Peperl came and asked: "Are you his orderly?"

I nodded. Peperl laughed, but looked serious again at once and said benevolently: "It's not so bad, especially if you know how to

deal with the major. A fine job! — You've nothing to do all day." But I thought very differently. I began to argue at once: "Indeed! Then why would no one have it, if it's so fine?! I shan't stick to it for long, I promise you. I suppose you thought you'd got me this time?"

Peperl's face turned scarlet with rage: "Do you suppose I'm going to be his servant?! I can't help it if the lieutenant gives the order."

"Get away, get away!" I said contemptuously and turned from him. "You're all a lot of scoundrelly traitors!"

Peperl sprang up and snorted: "Enough of this! It's no affair of mine! I've nothing against you!"

"It's all right," I scoffed and buried myself in my book. "You'll see how soon there'll be an end of my career as the major's orderly!" That was too much for Corporal Peperl. He bounced out of the room and banged the door. The officers' cook came presently and said I must help him. I went up to the kitchen with him, and he showed me how to serve. Then they came to dinner and it all began. I was clumsy, spilt the soup, got my sleeve in the vegetables when I was stretching across, and was helpless in the face of this awkward task.

"I am a private of the Train and a stableman! I can give the horses their fodder, but not these idiots! What business is it of mine!" I complained to the cook. He was an honest tinker from Berlin, and nothing put him out. He cut off a piece of meat and set it before me: "Gobble it up, my lad. Keep cool! Keep cool!" I ate and held my peace.

"To-morrow we shall pack up," said Peperl, "The officers are setting off to-day. You must go in the car with the major."

"That's nice!" I grumbled, and went back to the cook. The major looked in at the kitchen door and called me. I followed him to his room.

"Pack up my things and get ready yourself," he ordered morosely, and stood watching me. That made me nervous and irritable, but how could I help it? When I had packed his trunk, he sat down at the writing-table and wrote.

"Oh, and then go and find my grey coffee-pot in the kitchen," he said with his back towards me.

"Yes, sir," I said respectfully and disappeared into the kitchen. I did not understand what he wanted, for I was not listening properly, but kept on saying: "Yes, sir." And now the search began. At last I found what I thought he wanted. It was a grey acetylene lamp. I went back to my superior's room, held out the lamp, and said: "At your service, sir!"

He clapped his hands to his head: "I told you a grey coffee-pot!" He gazed at me round-eyed. I stood silent and stupefied.

"Go downstairs. You're no use to me," he growled. I turned awkwardly and went out. That was the end of my career as an orderly. Once more I was the fifth wheel of our staff wagon.

We went to Lida. Just as we reached the town Peperl and I had a violent quarrel, and for a long time afterwards we hated each other. I had been told to look for a padlock, but could not find it. Peperl came again and again, and at last he began to threaten me: "Look out! If you don't bring the padlock, Graf, I must report you!" He went for me, and I suddenly lost patience. Before long I was throwing everything that I could lay hands on at this representative of authority; I shouted threats and abuse at him and ran after him with a drawn bayonet.

"I'll run you through, you dog, you scoundrel, you miserable rotter!" I bellowed, and he ran like a hare. He just reached the carriage and yelled out of the window: "You shall be imprisoned for this, just see!"

"You can stand me up against the wall, for all I care!" I roared, shaking with fury, and I returned to my cattle car.

We travelled through desolate country, furrowed with trenches, and stopped at Waca, which consisted of a mansion and a few houses. There was a mere, close by. The whole scene was lonely and idyllic. There was already the promise of spring. I established myself with my horses in out-of-the-way quarters. Peperl did not report me; the others saw to that.

These were days of pleasant idleness and oppressive ennui. Fre-

quently I lay all day in my hammock, which I had picked up somewhere, and read. At that time my mind was full of the idea that in Germany no one had to serve more than two years, or three, with the cavalry. I told myself daily that that was a right which could be asserted, even in time of war. You just served your two years, and that was the end. Gradually it became a monomania, and I considered whether I should not simply go to the major, when the time came, and announce: "Excuse me, sir, my time is up. I am going to join the reserve!"

I argued with my comrades in favour of this idea. They called me a lunatic and laughed aloud. But I stuck to the letter of our Army Act, and could argue the case so convincingly that the others even began to reflect and said: "Well, yes — that's true, if you take it literally no one could stop you — Law is law!" But the next minute they laughed scornfully and said; "But you're crazy! — You're talking rot, my dear fellow! It's all quite different in war-time!"

"What do I care about the war! Did I make it? I'm simply applying the law!" I protested. "On December 1st I shall join the reserve, and that's all there is to it!"

"The war will be over by then, anyway," said the little chauffeur, Römer, consolingly.

"We'll wait and see!" I said ironically, and was satisfied.

One day we were sent nearer to the front, about fifty kilometers from Kovno. We were quartered permanently in the train. The cannon thundered in the distance, and on clear days we even heard the faint crackle of the machine guns. The Prussian Railway Construction Companies attached to our staff were ahead of us. Then we heard news of losses. One company, very near the front, suffered particularly. We retreated again. Then all of a sudden Kovno fell. It was said that the major with his car was the first to enter, and that later he was rewarded with the Iron Cross, first class.

Kovno was terribly devastated. We advanced to the bank of the Memel, unloaded, walked past trenches filled with corpses, through battered forts, over the Memel bridge, and into the town. On the

other bank of the river was an immense heap of debris, and we saw a great crowd of inebriated people cowering beside it. Poles, Jews, soldiers, girls, children, women — they all shouted at us, and all were drunk. Infantrymen were drinking out of cups and crocks, the local population out of pails, all without a pause. They were all laughing and reeling. We saw them creep out of the ground with frothy vessels; they collected in groups, bawling and drinking and shouting. It was a demolished brewery. Only the cellars remained intact. We hurried to join the crowd and slipped down into the cellars. There indescribable feats were being performed. There were immense queues waiting in the twilight by the beer barrels. People held pails beneath the barrels, and army kettles and jam jars, and whilst they waited they grumbled tipsily. One foot-soldier took a pickaxe and knocked a hole in a barrel. It broke with a crash and suddenly the reeling, elbowing crowd was splashed with the swishing liquid. They were taken by surprise and everyone waded to the holes from which it flowed, for the flood rose higher and higher.

We climbed out to the open air again, wet through and reeking of beer.

When we got back to our quarters we were tight; we left everything lying about in disorder and lay down. Peperl stood at the door, aghast and on the verge of tears as he shouted his beseeching commands: "Do at least take the horses out of the shafts! Put things straight! We shall all be locked up!" No one listened. We had a pleasant sensation that everything was spinning round.

Next day the major and the lieutenant came back from the front in the car. Everything had been done. Peperl had attended to our duties. He had even stabled the horses for me, his enemy. That was all right. We lay low. There was very little to do. For the most part we lounged about the fine town. I poked my nose into the ruined houses and picked up all manner of things for our staff orderly room; paper, portfolios, carpets, and clocks. Among other things I found a magnificent stamp album. Peperl took a fancy to it and wanted to have it.

"Whom does the album belong to?" he asked Dreier timidly.

"Graf," replied Dreier.

"Oh — wouldn't he give it up?" asked Peperl again.

"You'd better ask him," retorted Dreier.

The beer had been seized by the Commandant, and access to the brewery forbidden. It could be bought by the litre at the station for forty pfennigs. But none of us had any money.

Dreier came to me: "I say, Peperl wants your album."

"It's worth a fortune," I bragged, though I knew nothing about stamps. Peperl had been listening at the door. I observed the fact. He entered suddenly and stood still in confusion. I put on an air of hostility and turned away. Peperl nudged my mate.

"Ask him yourself! What has it got to do with me," growled Dreier. Peperl turned red to the roots of his hair and asked in a tone of embarrassment: "I say, Graf, wouldn't you let your album go?"

"You can have it for three hundred marks," I said carelessly. Peperl breathed an audible sigh of relief, looked longingly at the object of his desire, and went out to the orderly room.

"You'll see, we'll bleed the fool, and there'll be booze for the whole staff," I said to Dreier, and he took my part at once. We told the others. Indirect influence was brought to bear on Peperl. It took effect. That evening he told us of money that he was expecting soon. We pricked up our ears.

The next day Peperl approached me again with a deep sigh and said: "Well then, Graf, I'll give you two hundred marks."

"What?" I thundered. "I'd rather throw the whole thing into the fire."

"Well, let's say two hundred and a drink for the whole staff," suggested the little chauffeur, Römer. Peperl wriggled, scratched himself, and thought it over this way and that.

"Anyway! What's this about the money?" we all cried in chorus.

Peperl was confused again and protested: "I haven't got it yet."

"Then stand us a decent drink anyway!" cried several. The ice was broken.

"Very well, Graf, two hundred and a drink? — And we're friends again?" Peperl conceded and held out his hand to me.

"Oh, all right," I said, with an air of dissatisfaction, and accepted. Then we went to the station and sat down to a wild drinking bout. Peperl grew anxious.

"Come, come, that's enough now! It's enough!" he was soon whimpering. But we did not hear. Again and again the glasses were filled. Peperl sat by helpless and pale, and paid mechanically. Finally only Dreier, Römer, and I remained. Peperl had slipped away on the quiet, and the others had gone too. We sang drinking songs and set the whole room in an uproar. At last we left, abusing Peperl violently. We had to be in our quarters by nine. It was long past.

We relieved nature at a street corner.

Suddenly Dreier dashed away, dragging Römer after him and crying: "Lord! The major and the lieutenant! Look out, Graf!"

I started. The two officers were already standing before me. Alarmed and confused, I wheeled without first putting myself to rights, and stood at attention. The two officers stared at me speechless, and merely shook their heads. "The fellow is not normal," said the major, and the lieutenant exclaimed: "Get along home, you fool!" I buttoned my trousers without a word and went on my way dumb-founded. Suddenly I began to run. The pair had vanished down a side street.

Next day I was summoned before the lieutenant. There was a tremendous row. "You're a disgrace to the whole Bavarian Army!" he bellowed again and again. I had to about face ten times in the office and was given four days' close arrest.

After that I was not considered normal. It was rumoured that the major was thinking of having my sanity tested. But there was a big advance, and time slipped past. Vilna floated by like an enchanted memory. Russian worship was a new experience, and I shall never forget the golden domes of the churches.

The others got mixed up with women. I read. Already I was called "Brother Idiot."

The Struggle Begins

A LETTER CAME telling me that Jung had deserted and was in an asylum. The story went round the staff that a regiment had mutinied near Kovno; near Vilna the men had flung their rifles and medals at their commanders' feet and said: "We won't be shot for a bite of army bread!" The chauffeurs told how Russian prisoners were being employed in the firing lines and were going on strike, refusing to leave the railway carriages; they were freezing to death by the dozen, refused to eat, and were only reduced to obedience by blows. The air was thick with rumours. Moreover, every man in the Railway Battalion had a grudge against our major. "We'll settle with him the first chance we get," they muttered.

It was terribly cold. When we fetched water from the spring near by, it was covered with a sheet of ice by the time we got in. My feet were frost-bitten. I stood stiff and motionless in the cattle-car and weakly suffered the cold. On and on we travelled, over endless snow-fields. At one station the major looked into our cattle-car. I was fetching tea from the kitchen and was not there. The stable-boy was asleep. He was given close arrest, to be undergone at the end of the journey. He sat there stupefied and said again and again: "I am done for — I am done for! They'll enter it in my army book. It's all up with me. And I've got a family!" He had been a groom as a civilian, in the service of barons and counts.

I said: "I've had about enough of this foolery."

The other fellow wailed: "I'm done for."

I said: "Duffer!"

At last we reached our destination. The hole was called Rakischki.

It was a small village. Our train stopped right out in the snow, and we were told to unload. I was frozen stiff. The others brought me brandy and hot tea and I managed to move again. I got my horses out of the car. The stable-boy reported himself sick, so I had his lot to attend to as well. The others gave a hand. The baggage wagon was taken down. I harnessed the horses, tied the two belonging to the major, and the lieutenant's chestnut to the back of the wagon, and set off. The officers had gone ahead with the two chauffeurs. Peperl and the others drove to the village in a motor lorry to get our quarters ready. I started alone with my bag of tricks. Columns of drivers of the Train passed me, motor lorries rattled noisily by, frozen labourers were shovelling away the snow.

At first I kept a sharp watch on the officers' horses behind. Then I was overcome with cold once more and cared about nothing. It was a long way. I sat on the box as stiff as a log, cowering into my fur coat, and let the horses in front jog along. When I reached my destination, the officers' horses, which had been made fast to the back of the wagon, were no longer there.

The lieutenant came: "Where are the horses?"

"Disappeared," I answered.

The officer began to snap and snarl: "If the horses aren't back within two hours you'd better prepare to lose your stripes, close arrest, and an immediate return to your depot. Stand at attention, dog! Blockhead! What are you thinking of!"

I stood stiffly at attention. The lieutenant turned away in the see-sawing stage manner which he affected and re-entered the house. I remained where I was. Peperl came running up: "Hullo, Graf! Graf!"

"They can do what they like. I'm frozen," I grumbled, and ground my teeth; but at last I warmed my hands by beating them together, unharnessed the two draught-horses, led them into a room at the back of the house, and tied them up for the time being.

The rest of my mates came running up: "Good Lord, fellow! You're crazy!"

"I'm cold!" I bellowed at them.

"You snivelling scoundrel! Come on! We'll help you look for them! Do you think we're going to let ourselves all be locked up for such nonsense!" they all shouted. It was not till evening that we recovered the horses. A passing column of drivers of the Train had picked them up. A junior sergeant-major was riding the major's horse.

When I had brought back the officers' recovered horses safe and sound, I went and reported the fact to the lieutenant.

"You shall pay for this, you whelp!" he hissed again. Then he made me about face several times once more and withdraw.

"The struggle is beginning," I thought as I retired. The next day Peperl summoned me. He looked at me strangely.

"What is the matter with you? You're trembling, and as pale as death?" I asked him.

"They're going to give you a stiff punishment," he whispered.

"Really," I said, "so it's beginning. That's right."

"The major's away for three days. You must go down to the lieutenant. He's acting for him. But it will have to be reported to the major," Peperl continued. I looked at him. He did not dare to look me in the face.

I went down to the lieutenant's office.

"Oh, here you are," he snarled at me, and read from a typed sheet that I was sentenced to three days close arrest. "Is that all?" I thought involuntarily; I stood at attention and listened. "That will do!" exclaimed the slim, elegant lieutenant. Then Peperl came and led me to the Russian town hall near by. There he got the sergeant-major on duty, a kindly old fellow from the Erzgebirge, to certify that I had been handed over, and parted from me in a mood of depression. I smiled in his face, but he continued silent and nervous, almost like a timid child.

"Come along, mate, there's a little room at the back. It's still warm, just make up the fire at once," said the sergeant-major with unsoldierly cheerfulness, and he shut me in a small, dark, warm room, containing nothing but a wooden bench. There was some firewood left. I made up the fire right away, lay down on the bench, and

gradually fell dozing. All my limbs felt weak and I had no desire to move.

We got the same food under arrest as on service, and for about two hours a day we had to saw and chop firewood for our cells. There were about fifteen men under arrest, and a Polish prostitute, locked up here. Little Jewish boys came and brought us cigarettes and Russian white bread. The sergeant-major was a decent man. He made no bones about it. Two old reservists, also from the Erzgebirge, guarded us and looked on. One of them fetched me books from our quarters, and I read them by the dormer-window.

"This is fine," I said to him. "I won't come out again. What do I care for the confounded staff."

"Everybody's worn out with the long war," said the old man, with a kindly, troubled air. There he stood, bent and melancholy, a man with whom you could do what you liked.

"If only we knew what it is about," he said. "There'll be no end to it till everything is lost — I always said so — 'Old boy,' I said to my Gustav, 'we'll see no good of it when victory comes — the big bugs will get together and drink champagne, as they used to do, when it's over, and we ordinary folks will be ruined, — It's a swindle, mate, a swindle and nothing else — ordinary folks don't want to hurt one another, but the big bugs arrange it all! — A swindle, nothing else —'" He put his hand in his pocket and took out a plug of tobacco, cut a piece off, and put it in his mouth. He spat listlessly and shook his aged head.

On the third day I was released and went to report myself to the lieutenant. All my mates looked askance at me, almost fearfully.

"Well, I hope that's knocked some sense into you," said the lieutenant, "but there's more to come. Withdraw!" and the familiar about facing was repeated.

A mysterious letter came from Berlin: "Don't write any more. Jung escaped from Dohlem. On the run. Police searching everywhere." I did not know the writing. I only knew that Schorsch had been discharged from the District Command in Munich, and had settled in Berlin. So I did not write again, but awaited develop-

ments. Nothing came. I learned by indirect means that Jung really had escaped from the asylum and had been discharged shortly after his recapture. He had been declared insane because he was a deserter. He had gone to Schorsch in Munich at that time, but the police soon caught him, and Schorsch was imprisoned for five weeks for abetting him. The whole affair perturbed me. I wanted to know what had happened.

I wrote on slip of paper: "Private of the Train Graf requests a fortnight's leave; he wants one week to attend to business in Berlin, and one for family affairs at home." I hesitated and carried the paper about with me for three days.

"Why are you idle?" asked my mates on the staff.

"I am off duty after my arrest," I replied. They shook their heads doubtfully and said no more. They attended to my horses for fear of consequences. In the afternoon I let the officers' horses run loose for a time, and the lieutenant's chestnut escaped again. The lieutenant tried the effect of more tolerant language: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Excuse me, sir, but it's happened now," I said awkwardly. He lost his temper again and left me with orders to withdraw, and to bring back the horse at once. We all hunted and the animal was found again. The lieutenant wanted to hush it up, but the major heard of it. The lieutenant was gently reprimanded, and it was all over with me.

One evening I put my request for leave on the major's writing-table. Next morning Peperl appeared breathless and gasped: "You are to go to the major." I reported to him.

"You have asked for leave of absence," he said, holding my request in his hand. "Leave of absence is a reward. I cannot grant it to you after the way you have behaved — And in any case," he raised his voice threateningly, "I have been meaning to have you locked up again on account of the lieutenant's runaway chestnut, you good-for-nothing! — I'll have your sanity tested! Get away with you!"

I had to about face, and withdrew; I passed through the office

with a smile, and up in our attic I wrote on another slip of paper: "Private of the Train Graf requests the major to punish him for letting the chestnut run away." I waited for the evening and put the scrap of paper once more on the major's writing table. No one knew what I had done. All my mates held aloof from me. They were frightened out of their wits. Only one man, an Alsatian, would sometimes chat with me. I said to him: "The war will never end unless each one of us begins to revolt singly."

"What will you gain by struggling against the solid mass? You'll be put against the wall and shot, or you'll be locked up in a fortress and die by inches," he answered.

"One way or another. It's all the same to me," I said, and added: "We're much too well treated. Things have got to reach such a pitch that they can only subdue us with dog whips; then we shall resist. The oppression must become unbearable, and then the change will come."

"You're right," he agreed in a whisper, "but mind what you're about — There are traitors on all sides. It's a bad lookout to undertake anything single-handed, especially as it has no effect — The swindle will go on."

"Then the others can go on with it. I've had enough!" I said.

"Can't you shut up!" snarled the others from their straw. We said no more. In the morning Peperl dashed back as pale as death and gasping for breath, and exclaimed: "You are to go down to the major — He looks as savage as a bear." I laughed. In the courtyard the lieutenant met me and said scornfully: "Blockhead." I pulled myself up and entered the major's room.

"Three days' close arrest!" was the end of a long string of abuse. Peperl led me to the town hall again. He always did it with a gloomy air of correctitude, could not summon up courage to look at me, and answered none of my questions. The old fellows from the Erzgebirge received me with the same matter-of-fact friendliness. I liked that. Go ahead, I thought, stick to this! What do I care what they put in my record. I shall tear it up anyway. I don't care a damn for my reputation with the military bosses.

For sheer boredom I scribbled all over the walls of my cell and wrote up everywhere: "Down with the war!" or "The masses will do nothing! The individual must act!"

If an inspecting officer comes now, I thought, and sees that, there's sure to be a big row and more penalties; that, indeed, was what I hoped, for I liked it much better where I was. But there was no raid.

After my release a draught-horse died of colic. We dragged it out of the stable and left it lying on the ground. When I reported to the lieutenant what had happened, he said cynically: "The horse must be flayed! You must flay it and bring the hide!"

"Excuse me, sir, I'm not a butcher," I said.

"Hold your tongue! Go and flay the horse. Withdraw!" he ordered sharply.

I went up and lay on the straw. Evening fell.

"You're to go to the lieutenant," said Dreier coming upstairs. I was sick of this futile shilly-shallying.

"Have you flayed the horse?" asked the lieutenant sullenly.

"I can't. It makes me sick," I answered. We looked at each other for a few moments. The lieutenant looked as if he might burst any minute. I was cool. "If the horse is not flayed by midday to-morrow, you'll be sent to a fortress!" the officer sneered all of a sudden.

I said again in the same tone as before: "Excuse me, sir, I'm not a butcher."

"Get out!" he shouted. I went up and lay down to sleep again. Next morning I went to the lieutenant again and repeated: "Excuse me, sir, I can't flay the horse."

"Out with you! Get out!" he bellowed, and shouted after me: "Fetch two Russians from the veterinary hospital, and make them help you! But hurry up about it!"

I went to the veterinary hospital, fetched two Russians, gave them pickaxes and spades, and said: "Russki! Russki! Hole! Hole! Here!" and made signs to them. They understood, dug up the frozen earth, and made a deep hole. Meantime I took an axe and cut off the hoofs and head of the dead horse, which was frozen hard,

and flung them into the hole, and the stark body after them. Then we covered it up. At midday the lieutenant came up to me: "What about the horse?" and he looked at the place where the black earth was piled up.

"He's lying there, sir," I answered and looked him coolly in the face.

"And the hide?" asked the slim fellow, scarlet with rage.

"Excuse me, sir, the horse was frozen hard, and his guts were hanging out behind," I said.

"The hide!" shouted he.

"Even the Russians weren't equal to it!" I declared unmoved.

"Very well!" began the lieutenant, now in a fever of rage, and he approached me with a menacing gesture. "So you'd like fortress arrest? As you like! What do you want here, you — you ——!" He was trembling with anger.

"I have been wanting to tell you for a long time, sir, that I should like to be transferred to another unit; here I get nothing but punishments, one after another. I don't think I am fitted for staff duty," I said coolly.

"Indeed! — Hm! — You can think that over in the fortress, you whippersnapper!" blustered my superior officer, and went on in the same tone: "What are you thinking of! Do you suppose they'll make special arrangements for you! What have you got into your head, you ass!"

"Oh, well — I suppose I may be sent back to my depot unit and from there I can be enrolled in another unit," I said unmoved, which dumbfounded the fellow for a moment.

He scanned me silently and malignantly. Then he said curtly: "You wait! You'll soon see!" And left me.

Two days passed.

"Do go to the stable! You'll get ten years in a fortress!" whimpered my mates. I did not budge.

"I am ill! One way or another — it doesn't matter what they do to me!" I answered obdurately.

On the second day, at five o'clock in the afternoon, I was summoned to the lieutenant.

"Report yourself to me ready for active service within an hour," was his curt command.

"What's up, sir?" I asked innocently.

"Withdraw! Get out!" he thundered in reply.

"All right!" I growled resolutely, almost under my breath, as I left the room. And once again all my mates looked at me in strange, speechless alienation, as if they were afraid of me. About ten minutes later I returned to the lieutenant's office ready for active service, stood at attention, and said: "Here I am!"

The lieutenant turned sharply, looked me contemptuously in the face and said in a spiteful tone: "Indeed! — and now take yourself off to the Second Prussian Reserve Railway Construction Company and learn to use a spade!"

I began to tremble the least bit, but stiffened myself immediately and said: "I should like to say, sir, that I will never obey the order!"

The lieutenant started forward a step. A Prussian officer, who was sitting at the other writing table, bounced up like a snapped mattress spring, and both bellowed in chorus: "Wh-what!?"

The door of the major's room opened and the major burst in spluttering: "What's this I hear? — Wh-what! — Flat disobedience to orders?" and his eyes pierced me. I turned, trembling, and said in the same tone as before: "I should like to say, sir, that I will never obey the lieutenant's order!"

There was a loud, confused buzz of voices around me. The major pointed threateningly at the door: "Out of here! Get out!" My whole body was at once hot and cold; I went up and lay down on the straw, without even unfastening my knapsack, and there I smoked one cigarette after another and waited to see what would happen.

Night fell outside. Not a soul dared go to bed. I grew calmer and read the Hebbel calendar that I had found in a house in Kovno, and felt very dull.

Several people's footsteps tramped up the stairs. A light shone through the crack in the door. The lieutenant came, lit his pocket torch, and said: "Oh! So you're lying here." I peered at him. He

began to read an immensely long sentence of arrest in a harsh voice and very rapidly; I took no notice. Behind him in the darkness stood a Prussian non-commissioned officer in a helmet and two soldiers with fixed bayonets. I caught vaguely something about immediate taking into custody and provisional close arrest for direct disobedience to orders. I remained coolly lying on the straw and listened, without taking the cigarette out of my mouth. I did this not from pluck but rather from nervousness; I simply let myself go and made no effort. The lieutenant was white, and his eyes pierced me. When he had finished reading, he asked: "Do you understand?" I nodded.

"Are you going to obey the sentence?" he asked again briskly.

"Yes," I said indifferently, and nodded.

"Then take that cigarette out of your mouth at least!" he shouted.

"I must finish it first," I answered coolly. The lieutenant started, then stopped a moment to think. I heard him grind his teeth. Then, without another glance at me, he turned to the three Prussian soldiers with an air of command and said: "If he doesn't obey and follow you within five minutes, report to me below!" He stalked noisily through the open door and shut it with a bang. The Prussians gazed at me helplessly. After a short pause, the non-commissioned officer said gloomily: "Now, mate, don't make a fool of yourself, come along with us!" I got up slowly, hunted out two loaves of army bread, and brought them along in my blanket.

"Will you follow us?" he suddenly asked, speaking formally again.

"You can see I will," I said and wrapped my blanket round me.

"Lord, man! what a mess you've got yourself into!" said the non-commissioned officer, reverting to a tone of human sympathy. The soldiers, who had stood hitherto as stiff as posts, shook their heads. They let me go in front of them and brought me to the town hall again.

I can still remember it all clearly. The snow lay deep on the ground and we ploughed through it in silence. A bitter wind blew

round the corners of the houses. It was pitch dark. Only the sharp line of the officer's pocket torch marked the way. I thought all the time of the song: "They march to the sound of muffled drums," and a solemn mood possessed me. Curiously enough I never thought that they might stand me against the wall or shut me up in a fortress; it only passed through my mind that Russians must be sent to Siberia in this manner. And then — yes — then, I don't know why, I suddenly imagined that spring was come, and I was wandering at home through the wind-swept meadows, bursting into new life. I felt happy and free, and suddenly I began to sing:

"A little bird sang in the linden tree
In the warmth of the summer night!"

At first I only hummed, then, it seems, I was greatly pleased with the sound of my own voice, and though I now remembered that the officer and the two men were behind me, I raised my voice lustily. The three men remained deaf and dumb and merely tramped on. They let me sing; indeed I half thought they enjoyed this strange merriment. The exertion of ploughing through the snow made me sweat, I panted, the melody was broken, and suddenly I stopped singing ——

It was eleven o'clock at night by the time we reached the cells.

"Back again already, Graf?" said the sergeant-major, and dismissed the three men.

"I like your place," I said and laughed.

I was put in my former cell, lit a cigarette, walked somewhat nervously up and down, and turned a light onto the walls. Under my scribbled words somebody had written: "Quite right."

I settled down contentedly on my mattress and lay thinking all manner of thoughts before I fell asleep.

They Will Be Amazed

ON THE FIRST MORNING the reservist came with a can of tea, and said: "Drink this, mate! There's actually sugar in it to-day — It does you good, something warm in the morning." He put down the can, went out through the open door, and locked me in again. I took a gulp or two and left the rest. Dinner came. I did not touch it. For supper there were two little sausages. I put them aside and ate nothing. Next day it was the same. I ate nothing.

"Don't you like it?" asked the reservist.

"I'm not hungry," I said, and left all my food. The third day came. I thought its torments would never end. I ate nothing. "You're bound to peg out," I thought, and worked myself into a rage to save myself from temptation.

"Do eat something, my man," said the reservist anxiously, almost beseechingly. "You'll die on our hands." And the sergeant-major came and asked: "Can't you eat?"

I said: "I'm not in the least hungry."

"Are you ill?" asked the sergeant-major. I shook my head, smiling good-naturedly.

"No, I can't eat, otherwise there's nothing the matter with me — It will be all right again, sergeant-major," I said innocently. There was a rumbling in my stomach. "You've got to see it through," I told myself sharply, and made the best of the pain in my stomach. Polish boys came and sold me cigarettes secretly through the window. When it became risky to stay, they slipped away without a sound, but always returned. I stood at the window all day and blew the smoke through the grating, so that there might

be no smell. I was not strictly guarded. Nobody came to see what I was doing.

On the morning of the fourth day I heard strange voices at my door. The lieutenant from the Commandant's office entered my cell with the sergeant-major. I was told to stand at attention and report, but I remained lying on the bench. The officer blamed the kindly sergeant-major and abused me.

"Why don't you eat? Are you ill?" he asked, eyeing me severely.

"No, but I'm not hungry, sir," I said in a dull voice.

"Indeed! Do you know that we can force you to eat?" the lieutenant threatened.

"Oh, yes, sir, but you can't make me hungry," I answered. Then the fellow lost his temper.

"You seem to be a regular shirker," he blustered, and continued scornfully: "Well, we've got the better of others. You'll eat all right!" All along the passage he argued about using compulsion. In spite of myself I thought of the five hundred Russians who had been beaten into working and eating at the front.

But I ate nothing. The worst day was the third, and that was over. My stomach had accustomed itself to fasting. I smoked continually and lay on the bench. I shall soon collapse, I thought. In this way the fourth and fifth days passed. I heard our lieutenant outside asking: "Has he made up his mind to eat?"

"No, sir," replied the sergeant-major.

"Oh, well, let him go hungry, if it amuses him," said the lieutenant, and went away again. The sergeant-major came to me in a mood of depression.

"Do eat, mate," he begged, almost like a father. "You'll be sent home to Mother."

But I was inexorable. Freedom or death, I thought, and fasted, smoking or lying half-asleep on the bench.

An East Prussian private of the Train was locked in the cell next to mine. He sang all day long, then knocked, and in the afternoon when we were chopping wood he talked to me. Out in the fresh air I felt a slight weakness. At last, I thought.

I smoked perpetually. The sixth day passed, the seventh and the eighth, and yet I felt no signs of approaching collapse. Only I grew weaker. The reservists and the sergeant-major were in despair.

"What's wrong with you, fellow? Do tell us. Do you want sick leave?" they asked, sadly.

"I'm all right," I replied amiably and smiled contentedly.

"Hm — Hm — It's awful," murmured the sergeant-major, and all three left my cell shaking their heads.

As I lay sleepily on the bench, the walls and other objects gradually became blurred in outline. Everything spun round and round. But my mind was still clear, and I could plainly hear the East Prussian singing in the next cell:

"Four walls cage us round in the gloaming,
We complain all day long of our need.
Good cause have we for bemoaning, bemoaning,
Stale bread and water our meed!"

The monotonous tune penetrated the walls, and here and there another prisoner took it up. It buzzed in my head, and at last it seemed as if the whole building were humming these verses, which I have never forgotten:

"The curtains around us are iron
And wire entangles the door.
They have taken away our freedom, our freedom,
We suffer prison and scorn.

If friends come and seek us in pity,
Our jailors are cruel and proud.
Then curses and oaths are our ditty, our ditty,
And murd'rous our clamour and loud.

Our days of sorrow are over,
Our days of sorrow gone by.
Our glasses we'll clink together, together,
Our days of sorrow gone by."

The major rode along and inquired if I was taking food. No, they said.

He rode away again.

I began to wonder what was coming. I grew restless. Nothing happened. I did not collapse. At midday on the ninth day I knocked at the door. Men came anxiously and opened the door.

"I want to be deloused," was my request. All faces fell, and resumed their former melancholy expression. Several shook their heads silently. I was told to collect my things. Two reservists took me in their arms and carried me gently through the Russian village, as if I were seriously ill. In the street I saw Dreier and the little chauffeur, Römer. They looked in the other direction. I made a great effort to look desperately serious.

When we reached the delousing station the two reservists helped me to undress and carried all my things out to be deloused. I stepped into the hot water. In the baths next to me lay men on leave, who chatted and laughed. And now suddenly and rapidly my strength slipped from me. The feeling of weakness rose from my feet to my head. I broke into a cold sweat.

I called hastily to my neighbour: "I feel horribly ill, mate, haven't you got a drop of rum?" Outside the reservists were talking to the men in charge of the delousing. The man to whom I spoke handed me his flask. It was real field rum. I took a great gulp and hurriedly returned the flask. I was shivering all over and turned dizzy. I had a hazy vision of the reservists coming towards me. I tried to get up and fell back into the bath with a splash. I heard vague noises buzzing round me. Later I woke up in a warm room. A doctor was bending over me and was manipulating my eyes with an instrument. But everything was spinning round. Somebody kept on asking the date of my birth, and the date today. They rubbed something on my forehead. It smarted, and there was a sharp smell in my nostrils. I opened my eyes wide. There still was the doctor in white, and behind him a hospital orderly and one of the reservists.

"Are you ill?" asked the doctor. I shook my head wearily.

"What day of the week is it?" he resumed.

"I don't know, I don't know," I stammered, with staring eyes.

"What is the date of your birth?" he asked once more.

"I don't know, I don't know."

"Have you a mother? Are your parents still living?"

"I don't know, I don't know," I said, utterly exhausted. The room seemed to swim around me; everything was floating; nothing mattered.

It was already night when I woke once more in my cell. I did not know how I got there. They had wrapped me in woollen blankets.

I was weary, utterly weary. "Back in this hole! It's all no use, I must peg out or they won't let me go," I reflected listlessly. My eyes closed again.

Next morning the two reservists carried me out. I opened my eyes. The sergeant-major stroked my forehead and said tenderly: "You're going to Mother, old chap." Then they laid me in an Army Service Corps lorry, drove to the station, and put me on an ambulance train. I lay half asleep all the time. Dreams came and went. I felt the fresh air again, then warmth and a bed. Noises broke into my sleep. The smell of medicines penetrated my nostrils. I do not know how long this went on. Suddenly I awoke and saw the smiling face of a sister close to me; then I fell asleep again.

Something was sticking in my throat. I opened my eyes promptly.

The sister was feeding me with semolina. I spat it out violently right in the sister's face. She spluttered and screamed. But I was already asleep again.

I was told that this dreamlike state continued for a fortnight. Occasionally I opened my eyes, saw strange faces in hospital garb, and fell asleep again. Gradually I recovered, and, even when I was awake, submitted when the sister fed me.

The Surgeon-General came and flashed an electric torch in my face. I stared at the piercing little light. A cold hand passed over my forehead.

Slowly my strength returned. I became clearly conscious of my surroundings. One man continually stood at the window and plucked at his hospital tunic. Others ran round and round in circles. One

of them suddenly fell down full length and struck out convulsively, screaming and bellowing. A whimpering voice in the corner never ceased to wail: "I am mad! I am mad!" Then he was shaken with sobs, crying: "Holy Mary! Holy Mary!"

Every now and then the man in the next bed was convulsed, sprang up in bed, and ground his teeth till they cracked. In the centre bed on the other side a young man was propped up; he kept on pointing into the air with outstretched finger and crying: "New-Elm! New-Elm! New-w-elm! Ha! New-Elm! New-Elm!"

Lastly there was one man who jumped from bed to bed every now and then, as if he had St. Vitus's dance, tore off his clothes, seized his genital organ and stared at it.

Two attendants walked among them placidly, and at mealtimes I saw the sister hand round plates. Or two doctors in white coats went from bed to bed, examined the patients, and gave my neighbour an injection.

New patients arrived. There was a horrible noise all the time. Plates were thrown at the walls with a crash. One man spat at those who passed. Another flew at him in a rage. The attendants intervened. He was put into a strait-jacket and taken to another hospital.

For the first time I was given meat; I started up and pushed it away. "It's the horse, the horse!" The sister wanted to press the food upon me. I flung plate and food at the wall. The attendants came and threatened punishment.

"It's the horse," I said stubbornly.

"You're cracked!" they cried. But I refused all meat. They brought me biscuits and red wine. I ate the biscuits, but refused the wine.

"It's blood! It's the horse's blood," I said, pushing it away. The sister shook her head. The attendants laughed and drank the wine. Then I was allowed to get up. My knees still trembled when I took a few steps. I sat on the side of the bed all day without speaking a word and gazed out of the window. When I went out two attendants followed, on each side, and waited for me at the lavatory door.

I was taken to the Surgeon-General, who examined me.

"Why don't you eat meat?" was his first question.

"It's the horse — They have sent it after me," I said.

"What horse?" asked the Surgeon-General.

I told him about the horse that I was supposed to flay, and how its entrails hung out, and I said that since then I loathed all meat.

Had the major been in the right when he inflicted punishment?

The Colonel raised the question quite frankly. He was really flattering, like a comrade in a gentle mood.

"From the military point of view the major certainly did right. Whether he was humanly right is another question, but it is not in place to ask that now," I said tactfully.

"Ah, yes. Well, we'll send you home to Mother," said the Colonel, and the two attendants took me to the mental ward. I went to my bed and stared out into the white courtyard. That evening there was a big A on my temperature chart. It meant that I was to be transported in the ambulance train.

But the non-commissioned officer in charge hated me, because I did not lift a finger when there was anything to be done. One after another transport detachments were collected and sent home. New patients came. I stayed on and on. Weeks passed and I was still there.

At twelve o'clock one midday the Surgeon-General walked with clattering spurs down the long corridor to the office. I was going through the corridor as he passed.

"What? You still here?" said his Excellency, turned round, and went to the non-commissioned officer in the bureau. He was very angry. That very evening I was driven to the station and travelled home in an ambulance train. I was guarded continually by an attendant. Three doctors came and tried to question me.

"I don't know," I replied to all their questions.

I lay blissfully on my swinging mattress and watched the fields and woods fly past.

19

Imbecile

OUR TRAIN PASSED through Berlin and stopped at Görden near Brandenburg on the Havel. At Berlin I wrote a military post-card to Clara Oehring and gave it to a man at the station. I did not expect it to reach her. I knew where I was going and gave her the address, begging her to come and see me if she could. Before the train had started again I had forgotten all about it.

I was brought to an auxiliary hospital with some wounded men. We were bathed, received clean clothes, and lay down in the beds allotted to us. Then the sisters came hurrying along bringing us plates of sausage and potato salad.

Why am I put with the wounded? I thought. The sister handed me a plate of sausage. Plump! — it splashed against the clean, white wall.

General amazement. The sisters came running up, gazed at me in astonishment and besieged me with questions: "What's the matter? Can't you eat it?"

"It's the horse," I said calmly.

They all shook their heads.

The doctor came, and passing from one bed to another, questioned each man and spoke kindly: "Well, what have *you* brought us from Russia?" he asked me, and smiled genially.

"I once had an internal chill, sir," I said.

"Ah — and now? Now you are quite well?" he asked. I nodded and laughed. The doctor's face changed a little.

"Well, then, why have they sent you to us?"

"I don't know — they've just sent me with the others," I answered.

"Hm. Oh, well, we must just wait for your papers," said the doctor, looking at me. Then he went on.

The second day there were beef and vegetables for dinner. Once more I threw my plate at the wall. And once again the sisters came, questioned, besieged me, and looked at me compassionately.

"It's the horse," I said again.

I was given omelettes, scrambled eggs, or biscuits, and was allowed to get up. Whenever the doctor came he smiled at me pleasantly, and I laughed back.

At last my papers came. I was summoned to the doctor's office.

"Well, Graf," he said, quite pleasantly, when I had taken a seat beside him, "now we will try a little arithmetic." He had a large folio sheet in front of him, and asked: "How much is twice two?"

"Four, sir," I answered.

"That's right," he murmured with approval.

"What is the difference between a hound and a house roof?" he asked rather more eagerly, and regarded me keenly through his shining spectacles.

"The house roof is high up and the hound runs down on the ground," was my reply. The doctor wrote it all down. He turned to me again and showed me an apple: "If I cut this apple into four parts, what is each part called?"

"A quarter, sir," I answered promptly. Again he praised me, and the result was noted on paper.

"And if I cut all the parts in half again, how many have I then?"

I hesitated and looked at my questioner. He encouraged me again, and actually cut one quarter of the apple in two. "Well? Well —?"

"It's queer, sir," I said honestly, and passed my hand across my forehead, "it's just as if my head were cleared out and empty. With the best will in the world, I can't tell you."

The doctor surveyed me critically, smiled gently, and finally made a stroke with his pen across the paper. Then I was put in the

operating chair and examined. Once again he repeated the curious process of working my eyes. That was the end; I was allowed to go.

"I think we'd better send you home to Mother, don't you?" asked the doctor smiling, as he stood at the door.

"I'd rather stay in the army, sir," I responded, "they've nothing to eat at home, and I shouldn't be wanted."

In the common-room they all clamoured round me with questions about my illness.

"I don't know, but the doctor does," I replied. And then — why were the patients all standing at the end of my bed and staring at one spot. I went up to them and now for the first time I noticed my temperature chart. By the printed word, Diagnosis "Imbecile" was written in fresh ink, and after it a question mark.

Several of the men looked at me strangely. I suddenly burst into wild laughter, fairly danced about, and infected the whole room with my gaiety. The sisters let me do as I liked, and when they thought I did not notice they sighed: "Good God! The poor boy!"

When the doctor visited us I stood square before him and said cheerily: "Good-morning, sir! Beastly weather to-day!" or: "We've had a high old time to-night; it was top-hole, I can tell you."

I was always jovial and made all the others laugh, and I was treated accordingly. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

"Graf's a swine," said the Hessians, and the Prussians and Brandenburgers nudged one another with an air of mutual understanding and laughed: "Cracked, my boy, cracked!" So the days passed. I wrote letters, chiefly to my friends in Berlin. And one day Richard Oehring arrived from Berlin. He was promptly seized by the doctor, who cross-examined him minutely. Afterwards, when I was allowed to walk with him in the garden, he told me the strangest tale, looking deadly serious.

"They regard you as mentally deficient. But it's all up with you now. You must be prepared at least for a long period of confinement — I didn't know the part you were playing, and I told the

doctor everything that I knew about you," he said, gazing at me all the time. He left me in a mood of depression.

That evening the doctor sent for me.

"Well, Graf, so you're really quite intelligent," he said as I entered. "You are a poet and your work has appeared in the press, your friend tells me."

"Oh, no, sir, that's not me," I said stiffly and my face grew rigid. A few moments passed.

The doctor softened. "Sit down — we will have a little talk." He moved his chair quite near to me and looked with fatherly benevolence into my eyes. Then he grasped my shoulder, as if he wanted to shake me from a deep sleep. "Now, just imagine I am your friend, Graf — Just talk as you would to Oehring."

I sat there stiffly, almost without breathing, and stared at him stupidly.

"You are a poet," repeated the doctor more and more urgently. "Graf! — Come Graf! — Your writings have appeared in the press, Graf?"

I drew breath a little.

"That's not me, sir," I repeated.

"Just look at me! — See, I am a man like you — It is my duty to cure you as quickly as possible; that's all," said the doctor gently, almost appealingly.

Suddenly I bent down close to his face, so that he gave a little start, and shouted loud and louder still: "You're the worst of criminals! You cure us, so that they can use us as cannon-fodder again! You're worse than any General or Kaiser, for you only use your knowledge to provide more people to be killed! — The Generals, the Kaiser, and all the military men do what they have been taught to do, but you — *you*, you have been taught something different, and you lend yourself to the greatest crime. You bring back to life men who have been hacked to death, so that they may be murdered and cut to pieces again! — You're a pander, a whore!"

The doctor had sprung to his feet in horror, and now he caught hold of me: "Calm yourself, Graf! You are seriously ill." He him-

self was at his wits' end, and stammered. But I would not stop. I, too, stood up and bellowed at him. I was seized with uncontrollable rage.

The door opened.

"You're totally unhinged, Graf!" said the doctor and led me to the door. Two attendants were already standing there with my things. The sisters peered in anxiously, and behind I had a dim sight of patients' faces pressing forward. I was quiet and trembling and my lips were covered with white foam.

"You will have to go to a sanatorium," said the doctor in a dull voice, and the attendants took me between them. I was somewhat calmer. Everybody drifted away in painful embarrassment. Many gazed at me as though I were a ghost or a devil. We left the hospital and walked through a park. Suddenly I noticed the arch of a gate on which was written in large letters: "Royal Prussian Asylum of Görden."

We passed by some red houses with railings and wire entanglements in front. Walking about inside were people who looked extraordinarily demoralized.

At last we stopped before just such a house. "No. 4" was up on an enamel plate. One of the attendants opened the door. We followed. The door was bolted behind us. A few steps. Another door opened, and bolted again. We were greeted by a terrific noise and a reeking dense smoke.

An old man was standing on the table with eighteen tobacco-pipes of different sizes which he was tossing about like a conjuror. People were running about, laughing, whistling, smoking, or singing.

"That's Austria! — Here's to William! — Here is Hungary! — death to her! — That's Thuringia — Peter's pouring filth down onto the earth — Hallelujah, dominus!" yelled the old man, juggling with his pipes, and he beat on the table and made an unholy racket. Several men stood round and spat at him, plucked at his coat, and abused him. He abused them in return and repeated his crazy recitation.

I leaned against the wall and burst into loud laughter.

Then for the first time they noticed me.

"Come, Joey," said a tall man and took me by the arm. They all broke into a braying laugh. We whirled round in a ring. The noise rose again. The old man flung his pipes about in the air, and caught them again, then suddenly jumped down onto the floor and began to cry bitterly. One man fell down in convulsions, tore his clothes, and bit himself. The attendants seized him and carried him out of the room. A young man was running from one corner to another, sobbing, and crying: "Don't shoot! Don't shoot! Do-o-on't!" He flung up his arms and covered his face.

One began to preach in a loud voice. Everyone was laughing, or crying, or shouting, or sitting stupidly in a corner with a lifeless stare.

I was taken to the dormitory and made to get into bed till the doctor came. I kept bursting into loud laughter. The doctor allowed me to get up. I could go into the common-room and was given food.

We sat at long tables. Everything was firmly rivetted to the table. The table-ware was made of tin. There were no forks or knives.

Some of the patients shook spoons full of salt into the stewed fruit, several spat into it and then gobbled up the mixture. One man kept on battering his plate on the edge of the table and spilling his food over his neighbours. I had to keep a sharp lookout. If I looked away, my food was all gone. I sat stupefied in the midst of the confusion and roared with laughter again and again. My laughter resounded and infected the others. Often the whole room laughed in chorus.

The old man with the pipes was always the centre of attention. He abused and insulted the doctor whenever he came, and threw pipes at him or spat at him. Then he was given prolonged immersion. He struggled hysterically, he screamed and cried and protested, scratched and howled like a wounded bird.

A few weeks later I was taken upstairs to the first floor. That was reserved for light cases. The dormitories were smaller. It was quieter. We were given paper, and were allowed to play cards.

At two o'clock in the afternoon we were all allowed to walk in the railed-in garden.

Continuation

THERE WERE FIVE IN OUR ROOM. Leow, a locksmith from Berlin, was in the bed next mine. There was a big Jew called Mayer, a watchmaker from Cologne who was subject to hysterical fits, and lastly a Berlin student, who hardly ever spoke a word to the other patients.

Leow helped in the kitchen. We had very little to eat. Leow stole bread and sausages and shared them with us. And so we became friends, all except the student, who held aloof. He always stood apart, and one day Leow came into the room greatly excited, saying that we had been betrayed. The student was constantly with the attendants. We grew suspicious. We told the inmates of the other rooms about the fellow. Everyone avoided him.

"We must get rid of him," said Leow, who was no longer allowed to help in the kitchen.

"For the Lord's sake don't do anything violent," begged the starveling watchmaker, and he trembled like an aspen leaf.

"The scoundrel!" I said.

Mayer stood on guard when we were alone together. We employed a man in the next room as a spy. He was to listen to the student's conversation with the attendants. And sure enough Hanisch — that was the student's name — had told tales on us.

Leow clenched his fist and whispered in my ear: "We'll have him today." I nodded.

We went to the common-room. I was suddenly seized with overwhelming frenzy. All our comrades were ready for an outbreak. I rushed faster and faster round the tables. The attendants were

already watching me and taking their places in the corners. At this moment Hanisch came from the lavatory. With one bound I sprang at his face, dug my nails into his cheeks, and pulled him down. A terrible uproar arose. The attendants rushed at me, but all the patients turned rebel and helped me. The door opened and a dozen attendants came in from the "dangerous" section. Our arms were wrenched behind our backs. They gave us injections in our shoulders, and then we were sent for prolonged immersion. Leow lay in the bath next mine. He made signs to me, and shook his fist, exclaiming: "Vengeance." An attendant came and dealt him a blow.

We were defenceless, lying stark naked in a bath of hot water at 104 degrees Fahrenheit. The room was full of steam and wet and slippery. Three attendants walked to and fro at the window. If one of us tried to get out of the bath, they simply pushed him in again. So we just had to lie still, to lie and wait.

We were given our dinner in the bath, but we were not hungry. We grew weary and then weak, unutterably weak. We heard horrible cries of distress from cell doors on one side: shouts, screams, curses, and prayers. It was not till the third day that I was taken out of the bath, utterly exhausted, and put to bed.

From thenceforward I did not speak a word. Neither Leow nor others that I knew were near. The doctor came and felt my pulse. The gigantic attendant reported that I had demoralized the whole common-room and torn Hanisch's cheek.

"Is that true?" asked the doctor. I held my tongue and looked at him angrily.

I kept silence for five months. Even by myself I did not utter a word. I met my comrades again in the garden. Leow came and wanted to tell me what had happened. I kept silence. Mayer came. I kept silence. The big fellow from Berlin came. I kept silence. They were all horrified, and said I was dumb.

"I'll peter out or get my freedom," I thought again, and I clenched my teeth. I suspected everyone. Everybody was an enemy. When the doctor came and wanted to talk with me, I made a sign to indicate that I wanted to write something. They gave me pencil and paper

directly and I wrote down what I wanted. Shortly before I was transferred elsewhere, I attacked a man whom I hated, once more, and screamed in my excitement. Again I was given two days' immersion and everything happened as before.

As I lay in bed with the doctor beside me, the attendant reported: "He roused them all to revolt, and smashed up the whole place — The engineer fellow's in a bad way."

"Why do you do such things?" asked the doctor, looking angry. I tried to speak, but could only stammer brokenly.

"Come, come, it's quite a good thing that you broke out like that — At least you can speak again now," said the doctor smiling. Once again I stammered a few meaningless syllables and began to laugh.

"We shall send you away home now," said the doctor, and he left me.

I was allowed to get up again. My comrades were deeply interested and crowded round me. I wanted to talk to them but could not speak. I burst out laughing again. Then the attendant came and took me to the dressing-room, where he gave me my things. I was told to get ready for a journey. A Brandenburg reservist took me to the railway station. We passed through Berlin. As we left the Anhalt station I beckoned to an officer, stammered a request for a light, and held out my cigarette. He began to swear at me. My attendant explained matters in a low voice and pointed to his forehead. The officer laughed and gave me a light.

We visited Jung and Schorsch and Oehring. I laughed continually. The attendant was genial and treated me like a child.

In the evening we resumed our journey. We all met again in the refreshment room and drank a quantity of beer and brandy.

"Imbecile!" Jung shouted after me as the train started.

The others shook their heads in perplexity.

I laughed.

21

Into the Open

MY RELATIVES VISITED ME in Haar Sanatorium. When I stammered and laughed convulsively all the time, they began to cry. They did not know what to make of me, and left in a mood of depression.

My surroundings here were more peaceable. One of the patients was engaged all day in warlike operations and explained to everyone the position of the trenches and how the troops were placed; he cursed the "swine behind the lines," and occasionally he boxed the ears of the chaplain or one of the attendants. Then he was given prolonged immersion in the "dangerous" section. Another spent the whole day writing promissory notes on scraps of paper. Yet another compressed his ear continually like a rubber ball, opening his mouth at the same time so that his jaws cracked. He said it was the gas in his head. He was a Lower Bavarian of medium build with a gristly face, who ran away from the Sanatorium no less than five times, and once actually reached his native village. There he took a rope and ran to the nearest pear-tree, fastened the rope to the tree, made a noose, and put his head through it; at this point his family, the fire-brigade, and the policeman tried to capture him. "I'll hang myself on the spot if anyone touches me!" he threatened, and finally his pursuers withdrew and gave up the attempt. He returned to Haar himself late at night. When the doctors and attendants questioned and reproved him, he only shook with laughter and answered: "They dare to move! Things can't go on like that!"

They had to make an incision in the abdomen of a Munich mason, a reservist, because he suffered from the monomania that he was with

child. He arrived quite "normal," but one day he suddenly went to bed; when anyone passed he lifted up the coverlet and showed his abdomen, crying: "There, there, it's far gone! — It's already stirring —."

At dinner when the plates were put on the table another man went round putting little strips of paper on them, saying to each of us: "There, that's your bread card and your meat card and your ration of fat; now guzzle away!"

But the show-piece was August, the sergeant-major, whose real name was Laurence Heppenheimer. One day he crept out of his trench on the Western front and marched home, just as he was. On the road he procured two sacks and threw them over his shoulder, and whenever he saw a wounded or a dead man he went and cut all the buttons off his clothes, and collected them till his sacks were full. In this condition they had captured him near Strassburg and sent him to an asylum. He was a man of fabulous strength. He had been an acrobat and the owner of a travelling circus. It was said that he threw a mounted constable, horse and all, who took part in his capture. The attendants were afraid of him. Once in a moment of excitement he had nearly killed two of them. It was impossible to make any impression on him except by kindness.

For a time he smashed every window with his bare fist, and when the attendants threatened him with prolonged immersion, he went with them quietly, saying: "Oh, well, I'm dirty anyway."

He called the doctor "Max," and addressed him with the familiar "du." He was a brilliant chess player, and always won. And he knew a number of card tricks. If you asked where he was born and who his people were, he told marvellous tales. He had been a weed in the depths of the sea, had joined the gipsies, and possessed treasures and stables beyond all belief behind the sanatorium.

When he was weighed he said with an air of deadly solemnity:

"Oh, dear, I've lost seven hundred hundredweight again," and he sobbed like a child.

Once his mother came to see him. She was old and grey. He

embraced her and introduced her to "Max," saying: "This is my love, my sweetheart!"

"Indeed," said the doctor, laughing, "and how old is she?"

"Nineteen," said August sharply with a coarse, sarcastic gesture. Another time he bandaged his right hand carefully with his handkerchief. The doctor came and asked: "Well, August, what's the matter?" He was going to take the hand, but August withdrew it with an expression of alarm and pain, started back, and squealed: "Ow! Ow!"

"Why have you bandaged your hand?" inquired the doctor.

"Because I value it more than the other," whimpered August.

This man was my friend for the whole year that I had to spend in this peaceful retreat. We lounged together in the garden continually, and played tricks, or August told stories. True, other inmates joined us sometimes: a medical student in a strange state of mental confusion and a student teacher from the Rhine called Hobrecker, who was lavish with gifts of cigarettes and came out with impressive maxims. But for some reason I avoided almost everybody and associated with no one but August.

Gradually I grew more fluent with constant talking. The doctor brought me paper and books. I read a great deal and made notes.

One day Schorsch came to see me from Berlin. I complained of headache and excessive mucus in the nose. I was examined and my trouble diagnosed as discharge from the frontal sinus. One of the attendants had to take me twice a week to the military hospital in Munich. My nose was cut open and I had to spray it.

One day the doctor came to me and said: "We are probably going to send you to join the garrison."

"I'm not a soldier, doctor," I said. He scanned me critically.

"Do you suppose, doctor, that after eighteen months in an asylum a man can simply start playing with a rifle again?" I resumed. The doctor did not enter into a discussion, but asked: "Do you want to go on leave?"

"That's just like lengthening a dog's chain, it seems to me," I answered.

"Then you want to be set free?"

"I am free," I said, and added with more emphasis: "Even if you keep me here for years. It makes no difference. I am free. Nothing troubles me now."

"If nothing troubles you, you can go back to soldiering," interposed the doctor in a tone of superior wisdom.

"If I see a meadow, I shall just break loose, and if you send me to the depot, I shall say: I am no longer a soldier, and I shall clear out and shall land here or in prison," I repeated. The doctor reflected for a moment and regarded me thoughtfully.

Days passed, and nobody took the slightest notice of me.

One day in the middle of the afternoon the sergeant-major came and gave me permission to go on leave. I hesitated, but finally I took my departure. There was no one left in Munich that I knew. At home and in the village they regarded me with something approaching terror. A few days later a card came from the sergeant-major in the hospital, as follows: "It has already been decided to give you your discharge, and you are therefore requested to present yourself here. You must repay the money expended for your keep. It will be paid back to you at your depot."

I went to Haar in mufti and without the money. The sergeant-major stormed. But there was no help for it. In the office I was given my army book without any observation upon it, and then I was free to go.

August was discharged at the same time. His mother came to fetch him, and now we three passed through the gate into the open. The road was soft and muddy. The snow was melting and the sun shone bright in the expanse of the sky —

August had refused to part with them: the two sacks filled with military buttons dangled from his shoulder, and he pounded through the puddles in the worn sandals that he had used all the time in the Sanatorium, so that the wet splashed up; and when his mother scolded him he said resolutely: "I'm going to the mountains."

And so, no doubt, he is wandering still, this happy man, free from restraint and care —

"Come with me," said August with sincere warmth, and he looked me candidly in the eyes. For a moment I hesitated and reflected.

"You're a good sort!" said August again. His old mother stood smiling at me. I was swayed in two directions. Suddenly, as in a dream, I shook my companion's hand and left him.

Sometimes when I am lost in thought I see August standing before me as he stood that day when I left him.

Fool that I was! Why did I not go with him!

PART TWO

Step by Step

1

One Folly Ends, Another Begins

SO HERE I WAS AT HOME AGAIN, free from military service and able to make a fresh start.

It was silent in the house, and silent in the village. Since the death of my brother Max the property had passed to the widow and three little children. My mother and my two elder sisters still lived with her. Theresa looked after the business, Mother baked and did the housework, Emma was already so ill that she could do little but lie in bed; the widow mourned and had grown very fat.

Nanny meantime had served her apprenticeship, and had remained in the employment of her Munich hairdresser. Maurus had long been in the Vosges, and we had had no news from America of Lenz and Eugene since the beginning of the war.

I had pretty well lost sight of my acquaintances, and had made no new ones. Schorsch sometimes wrote from Berlin. I had occasional news of Jung and the Oehrings from him.

The war continued.

To be honest, now that I was at liberty to live my own life, I hated to be suddenly wrenched out of the routine to which the years had accustomed me. When a man is forced to become one of a herd, it is as easy as child's play for him to lose his poor little fragment of will-power, to let himself be pushed hither and thither, and after a time he thinks of nothing but the immediate future. That is what happened in the barracks, at the front, and in the asylum: nothing mattered. There was nothing that need matter. And man in the mass is quick to take advantage of such conditions. He occupies

his days and hours as pleasantly as may be, and his only thought is: how can one get the easiest job and the most to eat.

Latterly, for some months, employment had been fairly plentiful. Now it was slackening. The rainy season came. Gloomy days followed. I idled about with no occupation, ill at ease and irresolute. The villagers looked askance at me and grumbled: "That fellow's at home. Others have got to stand the racket out at the front."

I had been to Munich several times to look for work. Each time I returned unsuccessful. Theresa was growing impatient.

"I don't believe you can't find anything if you look properly," she said one day. "You simply can't go on sitting idle at home! The whole village is talking! Now, when all the menfolk are at the front, you really must find something! You're not looking properly. You don't want to, that's what's the matter!"

I had no reply to make. I only recalled that when we came of age each of us was to inherit a sum of two thousand marks. I had long been turning the matter over in my mind. I wanted to have possession of the money as quickly as possible. I did not give a thought to the use I would make of it. "Just get the money," I thought, "and your fortune is made."

I have hankered after money from my earliest youth, and always aspired to be as rich as possible, not for the sake of possession, but to spend extravagantly. Money, in point of fact, only existed in order to be spent!

So I said: "Yes, I will look out for something, but now I want my inheritance."

Theresa looked me in the face with an air of palpable superiority. She knew me.

"Your inheritance?" she replied firmly. "You won't get that! That's taken care of. It's invested in a mortgage on the house. That's out of the question, whether you like it or not."

"Indeed — oh, well!" I growled; and I went upstairs to my room and came down after a time in my best clothes. Theresa gave me a little money. Mother said with irritation: "One ought to drown one's children in their first bath, or put them in a sack of stones like kittens! That would save a sight of vexation." She al-

ways said that when we children fell out. She hated nothing so much as quarrels.

"Oh, come! For goodness sake, I'll find something soon! Don't get excited!" I said in a sullen effort to pacify her, and went out.

I went to Starnberg on the steamer. The lake looked old and ugly. The train was waiting and soon puffed out into the rain-swept countryside.

When I reached Munich I did not go straight to the employment bureau at the Baker's Lodge. Hobrecker, the student teacher from the Rhine whom I had met at the Haar Sanatorium, had written twice to tell me that he was in Munich. He had been discharged from the army shortly after me; he belonged to a good middle-class family in Remscheid in the Rhineland, and was to take his examination as a teacher. But not long after his return home he ran away, rented an elegant room with the money he had brought, and procured a directory. When his money ran out, he lived by writing begging letters to barons, aristocrats, and leading business men, portraying his life as a disabled soldier, in the gloomiest colours. His success was such that almost every day he received registered letters enclosing bank-notes. He rarely had to go himself and call for the charitable gift. He was a pleasant fellow and there too he was always lucky.

"My dear fellow!" he exclaimed when I told him my plans. "You're going to get work? — No thank you, I've no need to do that!" He laughed superciliously, paid for my coffee ostentatiously, and invited me to spend the night with him. "It's not a bad plan," I thought, when we reached his room later on. It was extremely comfortable, well heated and homelike. Hobrecker ordered tea of his landlady, and fetched bread, butter, and sausage. While we ate our meal he explained his "practice" to me. He had made a long list of addresses on a sheet of paper. A few were underlined in red, a number in blue, and the rest with ordinary pencil. The red ones were hard to extract money from, the blue sometimes invited him to dinner and gave money as well, those underlined in pencil were still to be tried.

My friend appealed to all these people, and had drafted various

standard letters for the purpose, which he copied and posted from time to time.

"My dear fellow," he said again after these explanations, "it's perfectly simple! Why shouldn't I bleed these old boys that exploit their country? Do the same, I advise you! You can have my addresses, if you like."

I considered. One could do it as a side-line, I thought, but not as a permanency.

"What do you mean by a permanency? ! When there's no more to be done here, you just go elsewhere! " Hobrecker enlightened me. Well, there was nothing to say against that. He was quite right. In that way, a man could browse over the whole of Germany. I grasped the idea. Nevertheless, it revolted me.

We slept together in his bed and in the morning I rose hurriedly and prepared to go.

"Have you any money?" asked my host, yawning sleepily. I nodded. "Give me some, then. You can have it back twice over this evening," he said.

My illusions were already beginning to be dispelled. I grew suspicious, but said nothing and gave him ten marks. Then I left, after we had arranged another meeting.

It was cold and damp in the streets. I was at loggerheads with myself. I could have spit at myself, and did not know why. I envied every crossing-sweeper, every cyclist, every soul that I saw going about his regular business. "They are provided for, they know what they are about," I thought; "you are a cypher." I was paralysed and perplexed. I wandered on aimlessly. I felt inclined to look up my sister Nanny. She, too, had once been in a like case. Max took her to the city without more ado and went from shop to shop, asking if they wanted a girl apprentice. Finally he left her at a confectioner's. In six weeks she had to be sent to the hospital, and when she was discharged she did not go home, but found an apprentice's place for herself with a hairdresser; and there she was still.

Yes, I would look up Nanny! We two youngest children had always confided most in each other.

Suddenly I abandoned the idea and made a different decision. I set out for the employment bureau, but on the way I changed my mind, and went in dull dejection to a coffee-house that I had sometimes frequented before; there I idled away several hours. The proprietor recognized me and asked whether I had work. For some inexplicable reason I lied, told him of literary successes, and said that I was employed in an office, and spoke of disablement. When at last I left, I was more wretched than ever. I wandered on without will or aim. It was already late in the afternoon. I was supposed to meet Hobrecker at this time. Suddenly I entered a house and engaged a room.

"Have you a position, sir?" asked the wizened landlady, and scanned me critically. I nodded.

"Yes, I start work on Monday," I said, without stopping to consider, and paid the rent in advance. The woman gave me the keys, begged in a pious tone that I would not receive visits from ladies, and left me alone. I breathed more freely and sat down on the red plush sofa. "Fool!" I said to myself under my breath. "Why do you do such crazy things?" I was vexed at the lies I had told. Why had the woman looked at me so suspiciously? I did not know what to do. It was cold and hideous here. Darkness fell. Suddenly I sprang up, went out, bought myself potted rabbit's liver at a butcher's, found a public-house, glanced carelessly at the papers, drank my beer, paid, returned to my room and went to bed.

After long reflection I came at last to a decision. Tomorrow I simply must have a job. "Otherwise you'll have to bolt," I told myself. Theresa had given me sixty marks, and I still had twenty-five. With that I could do all manner of things——

I woke next morning in a dejected mood. Everything was strange and repellent. I began again to turn over various plans: I would look up Nanny, I would meet Hobrecker, I would go to the State Library. It occurred to me that I might have a bath too. I resolved to write a story as soon as I was dressed, to take it to a journal. All of a sudden the curious idea occurred to me that I might ask the landlady whether she knew of a position for me. I would tell her everything. Once more I reflected and changed my mind. "Oh, this

war! This damned war!" I growled in dull dejection. There was a knock at the door.

"Mr. Graf? Do you want coffee?" murmured the landlady out in the passage.

"Yes, I'm just going to get up!" I answered, and heard her shuffle away. I jumped quickly out of bed, dressed, and after I had drunk my coffee, I went out. It is queer, when you have something warm inside you, you feel more stout-hearted. I made a bee-line for the Baker's Lodge. I presented my papers timidly.

"Discharged from the army? No further liability?" asked the man at the counter. I nodded and looked at his enormous goitre.

"Would you go to a biscuit factory? There's a vacancy there at once," he resumed, and scanned me glumly.

"Yes," I said.

He gave me a card with the employer's address. It was strange. The biscuit factory was only about five minutes' walk from my lodging. I presented myself at once and was to begin in two days.

"Very well, Mr. Graf, then that's settled? Fetch your things from home and come to us! I can count on you definitely, can I?" said the master baker pleasantly. This was a new world. My employer called me "Mr. Graf." So I really was free. It soothed me.

I returned to my room in high spirits.

"I shan't be back till tomorrow," I said to the landlady. She smiled again, a queer smile. She did not seem to believe a word. When I left the house she said almost spitefully: "Look, Mr. Graf! You've forgotten your soap and the writing-paper."

"But I'm coming back tomorrow. I don't need them!" I answered; I had no suspicions, and without giving her another thought, I took my departure. I went home by the midday train. Theresa was satisfied. Mother packed provisions in my box.

"You see! I told you so: there are plenty of jobs, you've only got to look properly," said Theresa with subdued mockery, and she added: "So you've managed now without your inheritance."

I made a wry face, looked embarrassed, and said in a tone of unconcern: "Oh, yes, I didn't mean that."

That same evening I returned to the city. I entered the outer door, but upstairs, when I tried to unlock the door, it was double-locked. I was alarmed and tried the key a second time. It was no good. I knocked. There was a movement inside.

"Who's there?" growled a man's deep voice.

"It's I, Mr. Graf! Your lodger!" I answered. "I have come back this evening."

"Mr. Graf? I don't know any Mr. Graf! What do you want?" asked an angry voice inside.

"Well! I engaged the room yesterday! Let me in!" I cried dumbfounded.

"Wait a moment!"

I heard the murmur of voices, among them my landlady's. The pair opened the door. The woman was holding a light and the man—it was her brother—stepped forward pugnaciously, as if he were about to attack me. But when they saw that I had a heavy portmanteau in my hand and heard me say: "Thank the Lord!" they grew more amiable and made excuses.

"You know, Mr. Graf, all sorts of things happen nowadays," said the man. "So you must excuse us. Three of our lodgers have made off, and afterwards they were captured."

About that time it sometimes happened that deserters took a room for one night and vanished the next day.

"Oh, yes. Yes, that's another matter!" I said, and went into my room smiling.

I did not find Hobrecker the next day. I left a slip of paper on which I wrote my address and added: "Be sure to come and see me soon at eight o'clock in the evening, be sure!"

During the day I settled into my room and wrote to Schorsch in Berlin, giving him my address. I went contentedly to bed and turned up the next morning at the biscuit factory. It consisted of dark, narrow cellars, very hot, in which about ten assistants were working. There were women employed here too. The whole place was slippery with syrup and dough. Our eyes smarted with the biting fumes of ammonia.

They took very little notice of me. One man showed me how to fill the great vat in the electric kneading machine with dough, and how to start it; and away it went. Slop-rap! the belts smacked, the motor hummed, voices shouted confusedly, the oven shelves rolled unceasingly in and out, the assistants' mortars made a dull thud, the tins rattled, everywhere steam and dust and sweat reigned supreme.

I clenched my teeth and worked dully like a brute beast.

2

“Labour, Noble Gift of Heaven . . .”

THE BISCUIT FACTORY had really been an ordinary bakery. The owner had adapted it during the war. He was a member of the Bavarian Parliament and of the Town Council, and belonged to the Centre (Catholic) Party. All the numerous hospitals needed invalid biscuits. There was no trade to be done in bread at that time, so he turned to the manufacture of biscuits and soon secured plentiful army contracts on all sides. He grew rich and his business expanded.

And now I drudged in those underground rooms every day from six in the morning till about seven at night, with two hours' break in the middle of the day. We were expected to turn to with all our might, and on the very first day I made the mistake of working too hard. My predecessor had made about thirty-two hundredweight of dough a day, I made well above forty. And when, after the first onrush, I wanted to slaken my efforts somewhat, it was no longer possible. The master now decided to add gingerbread to his other products, and had, moreover, engaged two new biscuit makers. I hardly had time to breathe. I started work in the morning quite limp. Out of doors it was already cold and wintry, and when I descended into the cellar and stood before my kneading-machine the heat was pleasant. But later it became intolerable. It always took a little time to grow accustomed to the conditions.

The electric light burned all day, and yet it was half-dark. Condensed steam dripped ceaselessly from the walls and ceiling. We had to be perpetually on the watch not to fall on the slippery floor. Dim light, stench, mud, dough, dust, and steam; the whole seemed at last to seethe. Heat! Heat, consuming heat!

The day began. I took the pail and ran to the store-room for flour. It was icy cold in there; the door and windows had been removed. I filled the pail, ran back to the hot bakery, out again, back again, filled the vat, poured in dried milk mixed to a liquid again, and melted fat, added sugar and powdered ammonia, pulled down the cast iron kneading-bar, and started the motor. Then up to the chilly courtyard to fetch syrup. Four or five tubs, that was enough. My arms ached. I always slipped when I took the measures of dough out of the vat. My knees ached with the effort to stand firm. My body was all of a tremble. The process was repeated a second and a third time. But shortly I was seized with rage, unthinking, sullen rage — and the weakness was past and gone. Sweat broke out at every pore. My shirt and drawers were dripping wet, until at last my clothes clung to my body. Great drops of sweat ran from under my hair down my forehead and into my eyes, from my cheeks and nose into my mouth, from my chest and shoulders into the dough, from my sore arm-pits over my hips, down my legs, and into my hot shoes. I was like dough myself. But I had got into an even swing of motion. I slaved away mechanically. I no longer felt tired. Only when midday came, or evening closing-time, when I stopped the motor and prepared to dress and go to get a meal or return home, then I hardly knew how to drag one foot after the other. It hurt to slip on my coat. I should have liked to drop down in the sticky mud and fall asleep.

I groped along the streets like a man in a dream. I gulped down my dinner in the Catholic Journeymen's Club, and then gulped down a second portion, just to pass the time. At last I got up and staggered back to the underground hell. So it went on. The fresh, cold air stung me. It seemed to tear the skin of my face. I never ate anything in the evening. I dropped onto the sofa like a log, sat on without stirring, and tried with all imaginable care to pull my boots off my swollen feet, unbuttoned one of my waist-coat buttons, and finally tore off my clothes, flung myself into bed, and slept, slept, slept!

I was surly at work. The others avoided me and left me in peace. All of them hated me, and I hated all of them. I worked like a

machine. People don't molest a human machine like that, they just let it run. I shouted abuse at the master baker's wife once when she came into the cellar. I did not know her. She was wearing a shining white embroidered apron, and she used scent. "Get away, you beast of a fine lady!" I bellowed, and she vanished in horror. Everyone stopped work and looked alarmed. The master came and demanded an explanation. "Oh, yes!" I exclaimed and broke off with an angry look. The master said no more and went away.

"My good fellow!" growled the head journeyman. "That won't do." I was possessed with hatred and prepared for anything, and I stared him in the face and cried provocatively:

"What won't do? What? Anyone who gets in my way has got to clear out!" The man smiled maliciously and turned away, shaking his head.

They were all cringing sneaks, all organized in the Catholic Union, all were hypocrites and put on speed when the master appeared. It almost seemed as if each were spying on his neighbour so as to stab him in the back. Only the girl packers, who came downstairs sometimes, were impudent and stole like magpies. There was very little supervision. Only the master baker's father, a peevish, wizened old greybeard, slunk round sometimes and watched us suspiciously. We had to be on our guard against him. He even felt our clothes secretly in the dressing-room so as to find out who stole most. But there were a hundred and one tricks by which we could deceive him, and we soon learned them. Indeed, as time went on I grew more accustomed to the place. I guzzled gingerbread and biscuits all day, and drank dried milk. I cut holes in the lining of my jacket above the breast-pocket, and before I went home I always filled them with biscuits and sugar and flour. There was a large cupboard in my room with double doors and a big drawer below with a lock. This drawer I gradually filled quite full. In it I carefully arranged the stolen biscuits and gingerbread.

One day, I thought to myself, you'll chuck this rotten job, and then at least you'll have something to eat for a time. Make hay while the sun shines.

I wanted to procure as much as possible and shut myself in behind a mountain of provisions, to save a little money, and then to rest. But I was slow to save money. My wages were spent before I knew where I was. Coal, wood, one thing and another, two portions daily at the Catholic Journeymen's Club — I was getting into debt again. And this was the third winter of the war. There was hardly anything more to be had. I had no time to stand in queues. So I said to myself, a wise man provides for the future.

I was in fact living quite alone. Hobrecker visited me once or twice in the evening, talked big like a true Rhinelander, told me where you could get a good meal, and always ended by wanting to borrow money. One day I gave him a good box on the ear without any real reason, simply because I was annoyed; then I began to shout at him, and he disappeared at once. I pacified my landlady and her family, who had run to see what was the matter, telling them he was a ne'er-do-weel who had become shamelessly importunate, and they were not to let him in again.

Nanny visited me once and then again. A fellow worker came with her whose acquaintance I had first made in the Haar Sanatorium when my relatives visited me. Her name was Louisa, and she was slim and fair and had a saucy, freckled face. On the occasion of that visit, when all the others cried, she laughed. I was pleased. Afterwards, when I was on leave, she turned up. I fell genuinely in love with her, and often slept with her. When I had to return to Haar to arrange about my discharge from the army, Louisa turned up again, as if she had sprung from the ground. She told me that she was with child.

"Very well," I said, "then we must marry. I will get work as a baker and it will be all right." Louisa laughed and went away, and when I met her again in Munich she retracted what she had said and, strangely enough, I heard no more from her. And so our love died away.

And now we were sitting together again as if there had never been anything between us. It was not till we separated that Louisa whispered to me when we were unobserved: "Come to the Isar

Bridge to-morrow evening. At half past seven. I shall wait for you." My eyes questioned her, and I nodded.

The next day I dragged myself dead-tired to the rendezvous. Louisa was smiling again. We linked arms and went into a side street. Suddenly she began to cry and laid her head on my shoulder.

"I really am pregnant — but not by you," she said, and told me of a little romance with her employer. She had gone to him as an apprentice at sixteen, at seventeen he had seduced her, and now, at eighteen, she was bearing a child.

"So that was the reason!" I cried, and illumination flashed across my mind.

"Yes, that was why I did not want to involve you in unhappiness," she answered, and like a flash she was gone.

I did not follow her. I stood still, thinking all manner of things, and then set out for home. I was sad and did not know why. I recalled the few nights I had spent with Louisa. An indefinite feeling of restlessness possessed me. I was no longer tired. I was aggravated by the noisy hum of a passing street car which flooded me with light.

"You might so easily have taken her home again," I murmured to myself in a half whisper. Suddenly I turned into another side street and walked towards the town. I strode along faster and faster, and when I reached Müller Street I spoke to the first prostitute I saw, and went with her. I left her, in a mood of disgust, without a farthing in my pocket. Next morning I plunged into my work again, sleepy and morose. Every now and then I thought of Louisa. I stared into space. She had given me her address. I never wrote again.

You must get out of this muck, I resolved each day; you must make some change. I lost my vigour. Sometimes I arrived late at work. Christmas was approaching. We had to work overtime. Often I did not get back to my room till nine o'clock. Brain and body were taut. I hated myself.

And now my nerves began to torment me. It began down by the dorsal vertebrae. The sharp, stabbing pain radiated outwards and darted upwards to my head and brain. It settled like an iron band above my eyes and pressed like a leaden weight. And every now

and then the accursed trembling began, flying to all my limbs. Between times my stomach felt hollow and seemed to swing round in my body like a heavy sack hanging from the throat. I was suddenly seized with ravenous hunger, but when I began to eat I felt repulsion and sickness. Everything spun round. There was a noticeable and unceasing rumbling of the intestines.

I stood amidst the slime and muck. I was muck myself, and nothing more. It seemed that the filth was rising above my head and burying me. Terror, disgust, horror and despondency, hatred and fear, raged within me. What was the matter?

"You're venereally diseased! You've been infected! You're lost!" The thought beat ceaselessly in my brain.

I rushed to the doctor. He was a surly, angular chap, obviously a victim of piles. He examined me superficially and kept on muttering something incomprehensible in his beard.

"Doctor, I slept with a prostitute! — I think I'm infected!" I wailed tearfully. The doctor took no notice and examined my genitals coolly.

"You're with the Reserves?" he asked at last. He surveyed me contemptuously from head to foot.

"No, I was discharged a few months ago — I'm working in a biscuit factory, and have no duties with the Reserves," I stammered in reply, and asked again: "Am I venereally diseased, doctor?"

Again the doctor passed over my question.

"Why were you discharged?" he wanted to know.

"I was insane."

The doctor gave a slight shrug.

"Where were you at the end?" he asked.

"In an asylum — And afterwards — I had discharge from the frontal sinus — I still have pain in my head, doctor," I moaned in confusion.

All of a sudden the doctor seemed perturbed.

"Indeed — Well! — Hm — hm! Ah, well, then I'll prescribe menthol for you! It's snuff, you understand — It will clear your head, you understand," he said, now surprisingly energetic; then

pointing to my genitals, he continued: "There's nothing wrong there — It's only nerves — There, get that made up at the chemist's — Take one of the tablets every day before you go to bed, and take plenty of the snuff, you understand! — That will clear your head!" He was eager all at once, and even came to the door and showed me out with visible anxiety.

I had the medicine made up at the chemist's. It was bromide and menthol. I returned to the cellars in a somewhat calmer mood.

I swallowed the bromide and snuffed the menthol, so that my nose dripped perpetually. But my fears were not laid to rest. My landlady's family were often disturbed at night and wakened me in annoyance. I laughed and screamed in my sleep. The bromide gave me palpitations, and I threw it away.

I went to another doctor.

"Nothing special — A bit nervous — you must just smoke less, and live a regular life and have good food," he said. He was on the staff of a local hospital, and only devoted part of his time to his private practice.

"I can't go on like this, doctor. It's impossible."

"Oh, come, come! — What would our soldiers say out at the front? — You must take care of yourself!" So he rebuked me.

I went back to my drudgery in the underground dens. My feet swelled, and I could not help constantly passing water. I worked ferociously. We were captives here, as we had been captives of the war machine! There was no possibility of stopping, much less of going home.

Well, and so I dragged through the days. "I shall peg out some day, and then it will be over," I thought lethargically. "I'm too much of a coward to hang myself, so I can't die —"

3

Confusion

THERE ARE ONLY TWO WAYS in which I have ever been able to escape from an unpleasant situation. Either I go off my head sooner or later and hit out wildly without any cause, or I try hypocrisy and peasant wiles. I wanted to get away from the biscuit factory, but at the same time I was afraid of what would follow. For the moment I wrote a letter to the master baker, sent my landlady with it, and stayed at home, because I had mentioned the discharge from the frontal sinus in my letter.

But when you exert your strength to the utmost and then let go, your energy gives out completely. Curse it, I should have to work again. Matters could not go on like this. I beat my brains.

I thought again of my inheritance, and Hobrecker's "practice" occurred to me. I did actually write a few begging letters to barons and rich business men. But only one replied, and enclosed five marks. Doubtless I had failed to write with the requisite vehemence and importunity. You can do nothing without learning how, I thought.

I read in the paper: "Money lent and loans arranged at shortest notice for adequate security. J. R. 53,248."

I sat down to write: "Dear Sirs," so I addressed the box number, "With reference to your advertisement in the *Münchner Neuesten Nachrichten*, I beg to apply to you for a loan of some size. I can give security, as I am to come into a fortune of 2,000 marks. Looking forward to an early reply, I am, Yours faithfully, Oskar Graf, Author."

At the same time I glanced through the matrimonial announcements. "Young lady of good family with own home and some means,

idealistic temperament, fine presence, educated, wishes to meet gentleman (of good family only) in good position with a view to matrimony."

I looked over several other advertisements, and wrote to a young war widow with one child, to the lady of idealistic temperament, and to an aristocratic sister without means who was nursing, all of whom wished to marry. I did not waste much time in reflection. "Most dear and honoured lady!" I began: "I am an author disabled in the war, and have the prospect of early publication. At the moment my earnings are only moderate, but publishing firms of standing and influence have expressed interest in my work."

"In future," I declared with presumptuous emphasis, "my work is likely to prove exceedingly remunerative, but at the moment I need a sympathetic wife with means, with whom I can establish a home. I have seen twenty-four summers, and have no physical blemish. I shall be glad to tell you more in person, and await your kind reply with affectionate interest. In heart-felt devotion, Yours most truly, Oskar Graf, Author."

I was downright proud of my letters. I recalled the letters I had written to the manufacturers as a boy at home, and those that I had written to publishers in the past, and I said to myself complacently: "What an improvement! You have learned a lot!"

And once again I pictured the whole situation: I should sit in a comfortable home and write. My wife would cook, I would write poetry and gain an entry into many circles. After my marriage it would be necessary to secure possession of my inheritance, and everything would go swimmingly.

When I had posted the letters I felt more hopeful. Next day I worked again.

I was curiously excited all the time. I thought of nothing but the evening, and my return home, and was eager to see the several answers. I lived in the pleasantest state of tension.

And anyway — an author must have a wife who does him credit! It's essential if he is to make a position for himself! He can entertain. He is seen in the theatre with his wife — and the Lord knows,

with men as scarce as they are now, a fellow can make a really good catch, I calculated. Besides — all really great poets have sought in women the material for their works. It stimulates a man! Schiller said that, and as for Goethe — ! They all laid more or less stress on it. I was almost cheerful at my work, and in the evenings, tired as I was, I sat down and wrote a poem or a sketch.

One day when I returned to my room, I found a visiting card on the table, with the inscription: "Mr. Hartmann, 34TH Teng Street, would like to see you." While I was reading it my landlady came in and told me that a gentleman had called and was coming back at half past seven.

"Hartmann? — Would like?" I murmured, and thought it over. I washed, put on my best clothes, lit the fire, and waited. At the time mentioned there was a ring. I opened the door.

A short, stoutish man, with a puffed, red face and red hair, introduced himself as Mr. Hartmann.

"Oh, yes — My name is Graf," I said in some confusion and ushered him into the room.

"You wrote to me about a loan, Mr. Graf," said the gentleman in a hushed, rather alert, tone, and he produced my letter. He had a curiously high, feminine voice. He sat down directly as a matter of course and continued: "As I said, Mr. Graf — now that I have seen you — I can manage it — Only, what about the security, if I may ask? — I could procure any sum for you at moderate interest."

My heart thumped. I gazed at the man. Money! Money!! flashed through my mind: "Any sum!!"

"You are employed here and want to start independently?" asked the man, and he watched me cunningly.

"Yes — and — and, oh, yes — I am to come into some property! Two thousand marks! — It's like this. I am the son of a master baker in Berg on Lake Starnberg — But the property is invested in a mortgage on the house," I faltered.

"Ah, indeed! — So you come from the Starnberg district? Ah, yes, from Berg? — Yes, I know that part! And you're of age, aren't

you? — And I suppose the property has already passed to the heirs?" the gentleman went on to inquire casually.

"Yes, I have never lived at home — My elder brother, Max, was killed. The house really belonged to him, and now it belongs to his wife and children — The rest of us are entitled to our share of the inheritance." I explained. The gentleman seemed fully satisfied.

"Well, as I said, Mr. Graf, it can easily be arranged — I have seen you now — I always like to have a look at my clients — Bring me the extract from the land register; you can get it without any difficulty from the magistracy at Starnberg, if you write for it; then come to me again. When I have that, the whole affair can be arranged in three or four days," he explained; he then rose and pressed my perspiring hand.

"The interest that I charge is not worth mentioning," he said again at the door.

I flew back to my room. I was a transfigured being. Now! Now for a new life! I gloated over the thought that now all of a sudden I was a rich man, and I wrote at once to the magistracy at Starnberg. It gave me, in particular, devilish pleasure that my family at home would know nothing of my machinations, as Mr. Hartmann had assured me.

That evening I fell asleep in a blissful mood, and in the morning I ran cheerfully to the biscuit factory. Work proceeded swimmingly; it was merely secondary and incidental. I sang in the midst of the hum and roar. I had completely forgotten the matrimonial aspirants. Nevertheless I ran home hastily each midday and looked to see if any letters had come. One day I found a slip of paper: "I shall be in the Arcadia Café this evening; important. Come; I shall wait till you turn up, George."

I was thunderstruck. Unexpected visits like this often upset me completely. They made a sudden break in the daily current of my thoughts.

When my friend had last visited me in Haar he told me strange things about a "Scheidemann peace," about Franz Jung and the Oehrings, about Liebknecht and the secret Spartacus League. His

letters occasionally gave me a little news of himself and my acquaintances. He had exhibited his oil paintings with the "Sturm"¹ in Berlin, Jung had been made editor of his trade paper, carried on a trade correspondence bureau himself, wrote novels, was in close touch with the Spartacists, and conducted propaganda for the cigarette trust on behalf of his paper. Every now and then I received a copy of a journal called the *Free Road*, edited by Jung. It contained all manner of verbose, involved articles and extracts from novels, which appeared, to the best of my understanding, to preach something like absolute individual freedom, the complete transformation of the relation between men and women, and an ethical system based on psychoanalysis. I did not understand them but I thought them vastly significant. I promptly wrote similar essays, sent them to Jung, and received rough, incomprehensible answers to my foolish letters; for instance: "Send the product of your unequalled stupidity and your sexual repressions elsewhere. We have nothing in common."

And now Schorsch had come. Something remarkable must have happened, and he would be able to tell me everything. I asked my landlady again. Oh, yes, the gentleman had called, yes, he came from Berlin.

That day I ate no dinner, and the hours dragged far too slowly. In the evening I found on my table a letter from the lady of the idealistic temperament, enclosing a portrait. She wrote a vertical hand, which betrayed queer embarrassment, and on perfumed, ivory-laid, linen paper; she asked me to be at the corner of Goethe Street the next day at eight o'clock. I was to recognize her by an illustrated paper in her right hand.

The portrait was of a lady with her dress cut low, a slender neck, and a face no longer young; it was plain that she had taken a great deal of trouble to make it look younger. The hair was puffed out, and seemed to be black. "Minna Sauer, 1917" was written aslant across the corner.

Strange! I shivered and turned hot. I did not look at the face. I glanced at the bare shoulders and the breast. I felt agitated.

¹ A Futurist group of artists, who also published a journal. *Translator's Note.*

But there was no time for that now. I changed hurriedly into my best clothes and went to the Arcadia Café.

Schorsch was seated there with Lollo and Betty, two models whom we had known in the old days. He received me openly with a laugh. His eyes were somewhat glassy and he looked horrible with his square head, cropped close now. I sat down quickly. The two girls giggled and assailed me with questions. "Oh, yes," I replied, and laughed too.

"What about you, my boy? What are you doing?" asked Schorsch, and clapped me vigorously on the shoulder. He smelt of brandy and hiccuped.

"Nothing, what should I be doing? — I am working in a biscuit factory. And what about you and Jung and the others?" I began to question, myself. "Why have you come here?"

"I have had business with the vice-control police all day — the brutes!" he snarled, and ground his teeth, which were broken and decayed.

"The vice-control police?" I asked in amazement, and wanted to know more. But at this point the two girls nudged each other again and whispered something about "stupid females," indicating another table, at which two middle-class girls were sitting, with whom Schorsch — as I learned afterwards — had also made an appointment. They were constantly glancing at us, and seemed annoyed at the sight of the two models. But Schorsch and I did not trouble about them, and he told me his story.

A short time ago he had had a letter from a friend of Finny's in Munich, who told him that the latter was to be sent to a penitentiary, and asked him to help. Finny, too, had been a model, and Schorsch had lived with her for a few weeks in his Munich days. Then she became a waitress in a wine-shop, and finally went on the streets. One day she was arrested.

At that time Franz Jung was preaching the total emancipation of woman as a first step towards a complete social revolution; he regarded woman more or less as an object which the State ought to maintain; and Schorsch was equally convinced that this was an

important step in the revolution. So when he received the letter he promptly made ready for action. He was always ready for action against the accepted forms of the law and institutions of the State. He went to a lawyer in Berlin, who advised him to enter into a formal marriage with Finny, and to get a divorce after her release. The preliminary steps were so far advanced that there was a prospect of success. Schorsch came to Munich and went to the Law Courts to speak to the district judge, and was kept waiting for some time. To pass the time he walked up and down the corridor and read the notices of the cases outside the various court-rooms. And there, among others, he saw the name of a former acquaintance who was likewise charged as a prostitute. He went straight into the auditorium, stood up suddenly in the midst of the legal proceedings, and began to defend the girl in a thundering voice. He was indignantly rebuked, and threatened with arrest. He only shouted louder. The girl was convicted, and when Schorsch wanted to speak to her in the corridor the guard pushed him aside. He lost his temper, began to abuse the man and to shout, and that destroyed his chance with Finny. For the same policeman was in the ante-room of the judge with whom Schorsch had to deal. He had hardly entered before that exalted gentleman declared: "Oh, yes, we know you — Of course we cannot grant your request under the circumstances."

Schorsch had been drinking brandy to loosen his tongue, and now he attempted a vigorous protest. But the lean judge only raised his hand and said curtly: "Go away! You smell of brandy! I will have no dealings with such a creature!"

So Finny's case was lost and the whole effort useless.

"That's the State! Out upon it!" said Schorsch angrily.

"My dear fellow, you might have foreseen it!" I said, and found it difficult to calm him. Betty glanced round wearily. Lollo said of the judge: "Such a mean fellow!" I grew impatient, and wanted to hear something at last about Berlin, and the prospects of peace, and our acquaintances. At this point one of the middle-class girls at the other table rose and approached us, half smiling.

"That is Selma Igl," growled Schorsch. "Do you still remember her?"

"Really?"

I searched my memory. Selma Igl held out her hand to me. She cast a venomous glance at the models. I made room for her. Yes — now I remembered.

Schorsch had made her acquaintance through a matrimonial advertisement before the war, and kept company with her during the whole of his time in Munich. Once, without telling my friend anything about it, I wrote her a love letter. We met.

That was it! She had said: "Let us be quite frank, Mr. Graf. You are too young for me."

We parted at that time without bitterness. But it is not pleasant to recall such episodes. I cursed the whole meeting with Schorsch. We could not talk about anything.

"How are you, Mr. Graf? — Come and see me one day — There are so few people that one knows," said Selma Igl, and, turning to Schorsch: "You must go: It is time."

Schorsch paid with a bluster. We rose and went to the station. I walked with Schorsch between Lollo and Betty, and Selma and her friend behind.

"Don't give her my address," I whispered to my friend. He nodded dully. We took leave. The train pulled out. Lollo and Betty went, Selma's friend said good-bye. We two stood alone. She asked my address. I evaded the question. Again she asked me to come and see her. I accepted.

"Hm. Well, yes, Schorsch — Dear me. Hm," she kept on saying mechanically, and nodded reflectively. I said the same. It seemed as if we wanted to escape from each other. At Stachus we parted.

"Then you really will come and see me," called Selma Igl once more from the tram.

"Oh, yes," I said indifferently. I walked on rapidly, numb and depressed. It was bitterly cold. Everybody stared at me because I had no coat. I buttoned up my thin jacket despondently and shrank back.

I had a feeling that this insignificant episode had destroyed my whole past life. I was furious with Schorsch. I ground my teeth, and was powerless to formulate a single idea.

Snow was falling heavily. The street lamps cast a strange, yellow light. The people passed noiselessly. All voices and sounds were muffled. The street cars hummed sluggishly past.

"Oh, Hell! I must get the money, and then everything will be changed!" I growled and plodded along.

I do not know why, I was suddenly seized with a kind of passion for revenge. When you have money, you can get even with everyone that has ever injured you! It's always like that: one against another! Such was my last thought as I clambered into my cold bed.

4

Money! Money!

SCHORSCH'S COMING had really upset me badly. I wanted at all costs to begin a free life as a literary man. If *they* can do it—meaning my acquaintances in Berlin—so must you be able to, I thought.

First of all I wrote to Minna Sauer, saying that unluckily I had been prevented from putting in an appearance at the corner of Goethe Street at the appointed time, but I would write again in a few days. In fact I had no longer any desire to meet her, for other matters were occupying my thoughts. Every morning, every noon, every evening, I hoped to receive the extract from the land register from the Starnberg magistracy. Every day it failed to turn up.

"They can't refuse it. You are of age," Mr. Hartmann had said. So I was torn between hope and doubt. I was perpetually making fresh plans for using the money — if the affair ended satisfactorily. At midday I went into the city in my dusty, grimy coat and looked into the tailors' windows. Then I began to calculate: You must have this and that — that'll cost? Hm. My mind was in confusion once more. It seemed that there would not be enough money. I calculated again differently, allotted the money in another way, and considered whether I should give up my work or keep on at it. My mind was wholly occupied with these reflections.

Not a line from Starnberg. I had half given up hope and was considering other possibilities.

One morning it suddenly occurred to me: you are a literary man, and besides that you are "young, ambitious, and moreover disabled."

Certainly, Hobrecker's practice, as a method of pushing one's way through the world, was not to be summarily rejected — but a man must look for help within the ranks of his own profession.

I began to write begging letters to all manner of literary folk, and lo and behold! I was referred to the "Mutual Protection League of German Authors." My correspondents gave me the friendly advice to apply to the League for a long-term loan. I promptly wrote a whining, toadying letter and despatched it to the League. They sent sixty marks. I took courage, for Dr. Kurt Martens, at that time director of the Munich branch, had added a personal letter advising me to write more fully to the treasurer of the League's benevolent fund. The sixty marks were only for temporary, immediate assistance; I should be sure to obtain a larger loan. He would support my application.

Here was advice worth having. My heart swelled: Germany provides for her poets! So I sent off my application. In reply I was requested to call at the office within the next few days. This time the letter was signed by a Dr. Krell.

My heart went to my boots. I was seized with anxiety and alarm. My conscience pricked me, for I knew at bottom that I was guilty of a very dubious, dishonest act of mendicancy. Nevertheless: what's begun can't be undone; if I stopped short now, they would very likely make investigations, and perhaps call in the police.

So I went to Dr. Krell's house. It was very elegant. There were parquet floors and beautiful old engravings on the walls. There were bookshelves reaching from the floor almost to the ceiling, and they were full of the most expensive volumes. A maid announced me, and the doctor appeared in a short morning coat. One foot dragged a little behind the other. I addressed him awkwardly with the utmost respect, and was about to begin my tale of woe at once. The lines of his face were sharply cut; he scanned me rather contemptuously, and then asked me to wait. He disappeared through the tall, white door. I was left standing in embarrassment on the parquet floor, and did not venture to sit down on the antique chairs upholstered in silk.

That was always my misfortune. My surroundings always paralysed my judgment, so that everything was more or less the sport of chance. I stared stupidly about the room and waited. The doctor opened the door and said: "Will you come, please?" I stumped clumsily into the next room, and remained standing, as if I were waiting for the gentleman's instructions; he now dropped into a large leather chair with the air of a self-assured man of the world and appeared to be glancing through papers concerning me.

"Will you sit down?" he said distantly, and bent a curious gaze upon me once more. I went to the table and gave him my hand; he held out his own in some surprise, and at last I sat down.

What finely modelled hands he had! On the fourth finger of his left hand he wore a ring with a long-shaped stone. And this marvellous house! So, when you really get your work published, it's something like, by Jove!

"Your work has been published in the *Sturm* and the *Aktion*?" asked the doctor, and scanned me critically once more.

"Y-yes."

"But you earned nothing — It's well-known that neither the *Sturm* nor the *Aktion* pay for contributions — What have you been living on? By writing?" he inquired again.

I hesitated and flushed red.

"I worked in bakeries, sir — and — now I am working in a biscuit factory, but I am ill now — once I had something in the *Jugend*, and in the *Münchener Illustrierte Zeitung*," I stammered.

The doctor raised his head and looked full at me: "Where did you study?"

"I — in Munich — and — and then privately."

"Were you at a public school?"

"Y-yes," I lied.

"Which?" he asked — suspiciously it seemed to me. I turned pale. I was in a cold sweat. I did not know what to say next.

"The — the Löwengrube — I can't exactly remember," my story tumbled out in broken phrases, I grew hopelessly confused and stopped short.

"Indeed? — We shall of course confirm your statements by inquiries," the doctor concluded; he rose with an air of dismissal and accompanied me to the door: "You will hear from us."

I ran down the steps out into the fresh air. I literally fled. Now you're in the soup, I said to myself, and pictured the police coming one morning: "Mr. Graf, you've been going round begging. Come along," and then — yes, the kind of thing that happens to ne'er-do-weels like me.

I walked along feeling small and crushed. I have a vivid remembrance of such moments. They have always involved more fear than penitence. I am overcome with an indescribable feeling of disgust. Loathing is added to fear. Sometimes these broken-spirited moods have lasted for days. I could see no way of escape, and I did what I had often done at home as a boy when my brother Max had found out something that was bound to mean a beating — I crept into my cold bed and began to repeat "Our Father" with childish simplicity. You must confess and make your communion and behave decently, and it will all come right, I reflected.

And then — never again! Never again!

Every night I dreamt of the police, and of sudden arrest, and in the morning I woke up exhausted and terrified.

I felt inclined to write a penitent letter to Dr. Krell and beg him fervently to take no proceedings against me. I thought first of one plan, then of another. Sometimes I contemplated flight; nothing would be any good but to disappear. But whither should I go? I remembered the war. The frontiers were closed. We were surrounded by a wall.

And so the days passed.

One morning a little after eight o'clock the head assistant, coming down from the shop, shouted: "Graf, you're wanted upstairs!"

I started with terror. My blood froze in my veins. Now — the police! flashed through my mind like the cut of a whip. I reeled along the dark passage and up the slippery stairs.

In the hall stood the postman; he gave me a registered letter from the Starnberg magistracy. My landlady had sent him round.

I wrote the receipt with a shaking hand, and hesitated before opening the letter. It was the extract from the land register.

My blood ran hot and cold. I glanced over the paper without taking it in. Yes, that was it!

I ran down to the steam-filled bakery and worked with fanatical energy. Everything was swept from my mind: Dr. Krell, the police, my fears, my disgust, my thoughts of confession and communion.

Money! Money! Heaps of money! was my one, tempestuous thought.

That very midday I hurried home and sent word to Mr. Hartmann, who made an appointment for the next day between twelve and one at a cafeteria near the station.

"As I said, Mr. Graf," the little man resumed, "it's all in order." He gave me back the certificate. "I have a gentleman who is ready to hand over the money to you at once — my provisional commission for the introduction is two hundred marks — The remaining charges are not worth mentioning."

"And when shall I get the money?" I asked eagerly, and gazed at him absently.

"In two or three days — As soon as we have confirmation from Starnberg," replied Hartmann, and added lightly: "And, as I said, my commission for the moment is two hundred marks." I was helpless and looked embarrassed. He understood my position and said with an air of frankness which inspired confidence: "Oh, well, you haven't got it? — It doesn't matter — Sign this — We can settle it all when you receive your money — You're all right."

I was overjoyed that this stranger should show such confidence in me of all people. I wanted to show gratitude.

"I can give you the certificate as security, sir," I said. But he looked at me as the wolf looks at a sheep, and smiled with supercilious kindness.

"No, really, Mr. Graf! — I wouldn't hear of it! We will settle it all when you get the money!" he said cheerfully, and went on unperturbed: "Well, as I said, Mr. Graf, I will send word to you

directly, when things are in order. Trust me — And then — what was I going to say? — I have had one coffee and two cakes — you pay for that, of course — one doesn't consider such trifles."

"Oh, of course! That's understood," I replied arrogantly, and paid my own bill and his. I signed the paper that he put before me without hesitation.

Hartmann really proved reliable. On the third day I got a card from him. I asked the master baker for time off and went to the city. Again I met him at the Station Cafeteria. He welcomed me very cheerfully. Another gentleman, with black horn-rimmed glasses on his broad nose, was sitting beside him, and regarded me inquisitively.

"Allow me to introduce you — Mr. Stahl," said Hartmann, and the broad-nosed gentleman pressed my hand: "A great pleasure."

"Well, now Mr. Graf, the important affair can proceed," exclaimed Hartmann, and this time he paid himself. "Come along. In an hour it will all be settled." We left directly and went to the home of a certain Mr. Teilhaber in Bayer Street. It was a prosperous, middle-class house, and we sat at a round table in leather easy-chairs. As far as I could make out, Teilhaber and Stahl were partners. First one and then the other read the extract from the land register. Then they consulted together in low murmurs. Finally Teilhaber turned to me.

"So you want money on this security, Mr. Graf?"

I nodded.

"As a special favour I will let you have seventeen hundred marks. You can have it at once in cash," Teilhaber went on.

"Seventeen hundred — ?" I asked in astonishment. "But it says two thousand there?"

Mr. Stahl interposed: "Yes, of course, Mr. Graf! But you must see that we are taking the risk. Supposing, for instance, that your brother's widow goes bankrupt, we shall lose everything, and you will have your money, don't you see? Come, you're a young fellow, aren't you, and you'll have the money right away in cash? — Well, what do you say?"

I could say nothing for the moment. Hartmann nudged me. The other two gentlemen consulted again.

Mr. Hartmann whispered to me: "I would accept, Mr. Graf! Or, I'll tell you what. We'll try for eighteen hundred if you agree?"

I nodded again. Hartmann took up the cudgels in my defence.

"Mr. Graf thinks eighteen hundred ——"

"No, no, we can't agree to that! In that case we'll drop the matter at once," replied the two money-lenders, curtly dismissing the proposal; and Mr. Stahl rose. My hopes fell like a stone. I became quite humble.

"Very well. I am satisfied," I said, before Hartmann could get in a word. "Seventeen hundred then ——"

"I thought so — But there's no occasion to accept! — You can think it over," Teilhaber resumed the discussion. "We haven't the least desire to press you." His words sounded confidential once more.

"Very well, seventeen hundred!" I repeated with a sigh of relief.

"Good," said the two money-lenders, and Teilhaber counted out seventeen blue hundred-mark notes on the table. I stared at them. I saw nothing but the bank-notes. My heart thumped violently.

"That's right!" said Stahl with satisfaction, rubbing his hands, and he made me sign a paper. I rose quickly and pocketed the money. The two money-lenders pressed my hand and Hartmann left the house with me.

"Well, that didn't take long. And — and, now you owe me three hundred marks — two hundred for the introduction, and a hundred for expenses," he murmured. I was overcome with horror and rage. For one moment I stood motionless with astonishment. The man babbled officiously, showed me the paper that I had signed, and recurred again and again to his three hundred marks. I grew limp.

"Y-yes, very well," I gasped finally, paid him, and hastily took my leave.

I was not more than half satisfied. I should have to upset all my calculations once more. I had hoped for two thousand marks, and had received fourteen hundred. Foolish, foolish, very foolish!

But my ill-humour soon passed, and I was all for action. I had

never in all my life had so much money. Overnight I had become a really rich man. Now for a new life — something quite different, something absolutely indescribable, unthinkable!

Fantastic schemes whirled through my brain; I was on fire. That same afternoon I bought myself a patent leather cigarette case, a pair of leather gloves, a crocodile-skin purse, and a pocket-book. I went to the best boot-shop and took away a pair of patent leather shoes with a grey strip inserted for the buttons. Then silk socks, half a dozen pairs at once. Then four shirts in the newest fashion, and lastly I bought a large trunk and a small one, and returned heavily laden to my room.

The money had set me in a fever. I had all sorts of ideas. It was strange! The hateful impulse was at work again upon money as such. In reality I wanted it so as to be able to write poetry and live free from care. But now that I had to some extent attained my object, now that I could live independently and do as I liked, now I began to covet a thousand little things. Now the craziest desires sprang up daily and hourly. Now I *needed* immediately things of which I have never thought before.

I wanted to see something for my money! I wanted to *possess*, and that in quantities.

I held on for one day at the biscuit factory, then I sent my landlady again with a letter excusing myself on the score of illness. She told me on her return that they had said it was all right and wished me a speedy recovery. I was relieved, and got up, dressed, pocketed all my money, and went to see Nanny. I loved her better than anyone else. She never wanted explanations, and did not worry about me at all. She laughed and was merry when she saw me, and was pleased when things went well with me. That was all.

"I've got money now, Nanny," I whispered to her in the hairdresser's shop. "I want to buy a suit and an overcoat. Do come with me."

"How nice!" she cried, and was delighted. "All right, wait for me at the Isar Gate at twelve o'clock." Louisa had hastened to join us. She smiled, I smiled hurriedly too and went out. The whole

morning I wandered about the shops and bought things. Ties, a sweater for skiing, leather writing-pads, a nickel egg-shaped tea-ball, knives and forks, art crockery, an umbrella.

I bought without choice or distinction. The hours passed far too slowly, and my money melted like butter in the sun. I sat down in a café, asked for pen and ink, and wrote to Emma: "Dear Emma, Now at last I can pay back the money that you lent me to get my book published. I will send it to-day. Let me have a receipt. You remember how everything went wrong then; I had to pay and then the publishing firm went bankrupt. But that won't happen again. I have always thought: Some day you will be able to pay back those five hundred marks. And now I can. Perhaps I will send it all now; it depends on whether I can. Love to Mother and Theresa. Yours, Oskar."

I went exulting to the post-box. But already I was beginning to change my mind. I had spent too much. I sent a hundred marks. Then I met Nanny. We went gaily to the store and bought a stylish, dark green suit and light greenish-brown overcoat.

"You really do look chic now," said Nanny, gazing at me. "Now all you need is a proper hat." She had to return to work. I went into the nearest hat-shop and purchased a black velour hat with a ridiculously broad rim, so as to look something like an artist. To pass the time I went into a cinema, and did not get home till after the house door was locked.

I locked the door hurriedly behind me, and lit the lamp and the fire. Then I spread out all my possessions on the floor and surveyed them. I gazed at each of them over and over again. I was flushed and hot.

I strutted backwards and forwards.

"You've got everything now, and it's all plain sailing. You really look somebody now," I thought. "The world is yours, you can begin to live."

Nanny had given me some good soap, eau-de-Cologne, and cold cream. I washed from head to foot and put on the new clothes. Proud and assured of victory, I stood in the lamplight before the

glass, put on my large hat, took my umbrella-stick affectedly in my hand in the manner of a celebrity of the hour before the camera.

Yes, now indeed I was a different man.

It is true, I had only six hundred marks left, and I wanted to send more money to Emma. But I could do that later. Six hundred marks still remained a vast sum.

I looked again in the glass. I was profoundly satisfied. I resolved to go to the doctor the next day and get a certificate for sick pay; for I had not the courage to give notice.

That was the simplest plan. If things went badly, all doors were still free; I could return to work and the place was still open to me.

In that way you'll get your freedom without much difficulty, and you needn't burn your boats, I reflected.

The Rooster Stiffens His Comb

I WENT TO THE DOCTOR. "Discharge from the frontal sinus," he said. I knew he would. I had managed to keep that disease as a legacy from my war service. It is a most desirable illness: it means that a man is more or less chronically sick; he can go to the doctor whenever he likes, and will infallibly be declared unfit for work. One suffers in some measure from headache at times, and there is discharge from the nose. That is all.

I had to go to the doctor twice a week. He painted my nose inside with cocaine. Then one day he began to cut away small pieces and drag them out with a wire sling. It bled copiously. For some time there was a buzzing in my head, then it felt clear. I was to syringe it two or three times a day with boracic lotion, and not to smoke cigarettes. But I did not follow these directions.

After the doctor had made the incisions, I took my illness very seriously and regarded myself as a martyr. I told everybody — my landlady and her family, for instance, and strangers who sat opposite me in cafés; and I wrote home about it.

I was free to pass the time as I liked, and received sick pay. I was full of schemes. One morning the postman brought me a letter from the Mutual Protection League of German Authors, signed by Dr. Krell. He returned my papers and wrote to this effect: "The M. P. L. G. A. has considered your application but is not prepared to allow you any further assistance."

I reflected for a moment. Then I breathed a sigh of relief. So that was over. I'm well out of it, I thought, and tore up the letter.

Then I thought again of the women. Now that you're so finely dressed, you'll make a conquest in less than no time: such was my idea. I made an appointment with Minna Sauer for the following day, outside the Arcadia Café. We really did meet — that is, we saw each other instantly, but walked slowly past and scanned one another with friendly eyes. Now and again she smiled a little, and then her eyes shone. I trembled and did not know what to do with myself. Each time I stumped loutishly past her. Her thick fox fur inspired me with hopeless awe. Beneath it a snow-white lace frill peeped out modestly. She wore a coat and skirt of narrow cut which showed her figure to advantage, and shining high patent leather buttoned boots. A feeling of warmth and contentment came over me. I was carried away by my discovery, and kept on picturing to myself how I would behave in company with her. Ah, yes — what a fine couple we would be!

I was conscious of a delicate scent as I approached her again. My breath came short and fast, and at last I plucked up courage and presented myself, hat in hand.

"Excuse me, are you Miss Sauer?" I asked with a beating heart.

"Yes? — Mr. Graf?" she replied in a high, somewhat chirping voice, and she smiled engagingly.

"I almost failed to recognize you," I stammered awkwardly. "I have been walking to and fro quite a long time." I looked at her shyly.

"Oh, yes — I saw you before," she responded politely. We had taken the first plunge. It seemed now that all the floodgates of my being were thrown open. My blood galloped hot in my veins.

"Ah — I am so glad! — May I invite you into the café? We can talk there," I said, feeling more assured; and in order the more rapidly to throw off my embarrassment, which had not altogether left me, I seized the handle of the heavy door and pushed it open. But a stupid mistake renewed my confusion. I wanted to stand back quickly and let her go in first, but I was too slow. She was close behind me and I trod on her toes and let go the handle in my surprise, so that the door banged against us.

"Oh — oh," she twittered, and seized her hat, which had been knocked on one side.

"Good Heavens! — How awkward!" I panted, and hastened to pick up my hat from the ground. "I beg your pardon! Excuse me!" For a moment I stood stupidly by. She made an effort to look amiable, smiled again, and stepped in front of me, and I trotted in behind her. Thank Heaven, she had taken the lead and went up the steps to the gallery where, my instinct told me, the better-class people were sitting. I hung up my hat and was going to take off my coat. She unfastened her fur, looked at me somewhat strangely, and seemed to be waiting for something. But at that moment the waiter came and took her fur and jacket and my coat. At last we sat down in one of the niches. There were table lamps with red shades, and only wine was served. Again I was thoroughly embarrassed. From my childhood I had never been able to throw off the idea that a visit to a hotel where real wine was served — indeed to any place with wine and waiters — was immensely expensive and beyond the reach of any but well-to-do people; so I glanced in ill-concealed terror at the wine-list on the table and thought with alarm of the small sum of money I had brought. I began hasty, secret calculations. "If this is the kind of thing that happens, you'll spend your last hundreds on this matrimonial search; and remember, you may gain nothing." Such were the thoughts which buzzed in my head, while I smiled once more and asked almost jovially: "And now what will you have?"

Already I felt better, for the prices were not so very exorbitant. Anybody might come here! I reflected that I was wearing a new suit, and I began to look boldly at the people round about.

"A cup of mocha! It was cold outside," she said, and I noticed that her tongue was too long and that she pronounced "s" like the English "th." Then she smiled again.

Unobserved I watched her more closely. She was really a fine woman. She was well-dressed in the manner of middle-class women, a fashion which I liked, which impressed me and inspired me with respect. Her blouse was cut rather low and from the V-shaped neck

dainty lace and a blue ribbon elegantly tied peeped out. Her skin was very white and a good deal powdered. She wore rings on her fingers!

We simply could not get on with the conversation! The waiter brought the coffee-cups and the cakes.

"How cold it is to-day," she said once more.

"Yes — a detestable winter! But it's warm in here," I answered. She bent an obviously questioning gaze upon me.

"How old are you, Mr. Graf?" she asked. I flushed and nearly lost my temper, for I had told her in my letter.

"I am twenty-four. And you?" I asked.

She made rather a wry face, and did not answer, but only said: "Then there is too much difference in our ages. I want someone steadier. You won't take it ill from me, will you, Mr. Graf?"

"Yes — then there's nothing to be done about it?" I asked doubtfully, and made an effort to look innocent.

"And then, you see, I really want to find a gentleman in a secure position — I have a beautiful home — I have never moved in artistic circles — ." She spoke affectedly.

"Hm — Oh, well, then there's nothing more to be done! — Perhaps we could agree! — But of course I won't press you," I said very pat. But she shook her head and smiled again ironically.

And now the coffee-contrivances arrived. Here was a new source of alarm. Hitherto I had deliberately concealed my red hands under the table, and here came these confounded contraptions! And it was quite useless to ignore them for the moment. My companion was already pouring out her coffee. I must do the same, for better or for worse. Desperate, I watched carefully how she worked the thing. Cold perspiration ran down my armpits. You'll never manage that, I said to myself, and was just going to bring my hands out from under the table. But thank Heaven! at this point my companion said: "Shall I pour out yours?"

"Y-yes, will you please!" I promptly replied. A weight was lifted from my mind. I looked at her with admiration. My goodness! A woman like that! She really did seem magnificent. What a pity! Good Lord, but she *must* like me! I returned to the subject.

"You know, you ought to realize that a literary man has to start young — It's true that one has a hard struggle till one succeeds, but that's just why I need a wife — I don't want to impose on you," I said confidently, and proceeded to describe what might be, in the most attractive colours. But nothing could persuade her to change her mind. In the end I actually showed my irritation at her everlasting head-shaking and her sceptical smiles. She always brought forward her point about "a gentleman in a good position," and the difference in age.

Already our conversation had been broken by several awkward pauses. At last she resumed with: "Well, it's getting late. I must go home, Mr. Graf."

Although I was relieved, I urged her to stay a little longer. It was no use. I beckoned to the waiter.

"All on one bill," I said superciliously.

"No! No! I shall pay for myself, please!" she interrupted. She was plainly offended. The waiter paused in uncertainty, and I looked at her irresolutely.

"Oh, please!"

"No! No! What can you be thinking of! I really can't allow that!" Her refusal was almost vehement, and she took her money out of her silver hand-bag and turned to the waiter: "I have had one mocha and two cakes."

I let her pay, and paid for myself, and we went out.

"I should never let a gentleman pay for me," she pattered indignantly as we left the café. I walked beside her in stupefied silence till we came to Goethe Street. At the corner she told me to leave her. I took off my large hat, pressed her hand, promised to return the photograph, and went on my way.

The streets were still gay and full of life. Snow was falling. The people hurried past. I was depressed. I plodded along aimlessly. At Stachus I stood still. Suddenly I was seized again with that strange restlessness. I turned into Sonnen Street and went on to Müller Street. I kept passing shyly by the prostitutes who were walking to and fro. I did not dare to address any of them. Once or twice I looked up when a girl approached. A tingling sense of stupefaction

overcame me. I felt a lump in my throat, and my face was flushed. I went with the first who spoke to me. Scruples were without effect; I had lost all power of resistance.

Late that night when I came home I wrote a long, sentimental letter to Minna Sauer: "You have made me unhappy, dear lady! You have rejected me, and I do not know what I have to live for," was my theme, with many variations. I put her portrait in an envelope, and next day I posted the letter.

I began to write poetry again. I sent manuscripts to all kinds of journals. I wrote at night and slept by day. That gave my landlady the impression that I was ill. Late in the afternoon I got up, dressed, drank some tea and ate biscuits and gingerbread, and disappeared. "I am going to see my sister," I said, when the landlady saw me go out. But in reality I was almost afraid to meet Nanny. I lounged in cafés where there was music, hunted out cabarets of shady reputation, and when they closed, went to Müller Street. It was strange: no sooner had I left the cabaret and seen a girl walking to and fro, than reflection took flight. I thought with horror of my vanishing money. It was useless. Nor was there any security in the fact that each day I took only a certain sum with me, so as to keep out of temptation. I could not resist, but slipped back home—however late it was—and fetched more money. And then I resumed my wanderings. I wanted to walk till I was tired out, I wanted to subdue my passions with the cold, I wanted—oh, how much I wanted! When a girl appeared I broke into perspiration all over. Something rose from my stomach to my throat and stuck there. I did not know whether to run away, or to stand still, or to cry aloud.

In this way my money took wings. Then for the sake of economy I generally wandered till dawn and then went to the prostitutes' quarter. Solitary and cowering and stiff with cold, a few girls who had not earned enough in the night were still plodding along. They made for me at once. They asked much less, and if one tried to pass on they named an even lower price.

"Yes—yes. Come along!" was all I could say when one of them stopped me. She took my arm, I felt her rounded hips and was no

longer conscious of the cold. My weariness left me. My blood surged and raced in my veins. I wanted to quicken my steps. She murmured something. I slackened my pace, and then, when at last we reached the dark tenement house, I fell upon her, clutched her, and fingered her all over. I began to pant and to babble. She had the utmost difficulty in reaching her room with me. She hardly had time to light the lamp. I literally tore the clothes from her. Her white, flabby body showed through her lace-trimmed undergarments. I clutched her fast. Everything was in a mist. I was in a burning fever. It was in vain that she talked and laughed, pushed me away and reviled me. She was free to turn out my trouser pockets and take all the money in them. I did not see. I fell upon her like a burst sack —

I did not come to myself till I was out in the cold, faintly lighted street. I was ashamed to be seen by the snow-sweepers and crept timidly past them. I pulled my coat round my ears, and when there was no one in sight I began to run and reached my room dripping with perspiration. I did not light the lamp, I did not want to see myself. I stood still in consternation.

I had once written a poem in which the following lines occurred :

At twenty man has lost humanity!
Half child, half beast he is.
His sole salvation is his yearning to himself to die,
His longing for the heights,
When on him beams that light
That breaks forth suddenly,
Draws him to life and mercy by its might.

Nonsense! When the next evening came, the same happened again! I wanted to send another four hundred marks to my sister Emma, who was ill — and my money was nearly all gone.

Money! Accursed money, that was at the root of all the trouble!
That was Hell!

I clenched my teeth and sobbed. I thought of my mother. Ever since she was twenty she had got up at four o'clock every morning,

and had worked and worked till she was ready to drop, and then went to bed at ten o'clock. She was already in her sixties, both her feet were ulcerated, and she suffered without complaining much. She had brought eleven children into the world, and she was religious — religious and nothing else!

I thought of my brother, Maurus, at the front, and of my sisters. They all had to live, we were of the same kin, and yet they made their way in the world honestly!

You're the worst, the most contemptible, of scoundrels! I could not shake off the thought. I was still standing in the middle of the room. I was plunged in unspeakable misery, in awful despair. I lit the lamp, went to the wash-stand, stripped naked in spite of the cold, and washed from head to foot again and again. Fanatically. After I had rubbed myself down I felt better for a moment, but only for one single moment. Then the clouds closed in again.

I stood shivering there, my limbs blue with cold. I seemed to see my body slowly rotting. I flung myself on the sofa and sobbed.

Why had Minna Sauer refused me? I would have done anything! I would have accepted anyone, *anyone*!!! It was all over with me!

Outside the day dawned grey. The sky was hideous. Down below the street cars hummed.

Yes! Yes, indeed! Yes, Mother had been right: a woman should drown her children in the first bath, or treat them like kittens — just a sack — stones in it and — ssst — into the water!

I wanted to die, to be stone dead. I did not know how to drag on my existence —

6

Marriage, and away with Despair . . .

MY TIME PASSED in aimless idling. My days were devoid of interest, everything melted away into meaningless folly. I often slept till evening. It cost me the utmost effort to go to the doctor. I lounged in cafés, wandered about the streets, spent my money to no purpose.

I did not want to see anybody. I even found my landlady and her family a source of annoyance. I woke up with disgust and fell asleep again with disgust.

One day Selma Igl visited me. Schorsch had sent her my address from Berlin, in spite of my warning.

Her face was thin to the point of ugliness, and her eyes protruded. She had asthma, and gasped with every breath. She asked how I was, and why I never came to see her. I made my illness the excuse. We had tea and spoke of Schorsch, and the bad times. I talked continually without thinking what I said. Anything to pass the time. I avoided meeting her eyes. When she went I accompanied her to the tram. She admired my suit and gazed respectfully at everything I wore.

“You know, Mr. Graf, there are so few people with whom one can talk! — You really must come and see me soon! Really!” she said as she got into the tram. “Yes,” I answered mechanically. No, I thought. I went straight back to my room and got into bed. My only desire was to hear and see nothing. I lay there and gazed at the ceiling till my eyes would no longer stay open.

But finally, after a long time, there was only one thing to do: work.

I went to the doctor and pretended to be as sound as a bell. He took his nickel funnel and looked up my nose. "Y-y-yes, it's healing nicely," he muttered, "but you must go on syringing it well." Then he wrote "Fit for work" on my card, and let me go.

And now I needed all my skill to get back into the way of work at the biscuit factory, for when once a job had been interrupted it counted with me as over and done with. To make a fresh start there, seemed to me like begging for favour and pity. In any case I was betrayed and sold; but I preferred to make a start elsewhere, however bad the conditions.

Three times I tried to return to the biscuit factory, three times I turned back again. At last I summoned all my resolution and went to see the master baker. In the shop they looked askance at me.

"Oh! So you've been ill? What was the matter with you?" inquired the withered shop-woman, who had served there for twenty years. She regarded me with obvious contempt. I replied meekly, and — curiously enough — she took my part at once.

"Really! Discharge from the frontal sinus? Dear me, that's bad. I know about it — the master had it too and had to undergo an operation," she told me, and she looked much more sympathetic. She announced my arrival to the master directly. Already I was plucking up courage. I wanted to describe my illness to my fellow sufferer, the master baker, in such a way as to enlist his warm sympathy. I entered the office a few minutes later with the most pitiful expression, and was prepared straightway to tell my pathetic tale. But I hardly got in a word. The master turned to me with an expression at once preoccupied and calm, and said drily: "Well, are you all right again, Mr. Graf? Can you start work again?" And when I nodded assent, he added casually: "Have the operation, it's the best thing to do. Go to Dr. Mahr, he treated me. Then you'll soon be rid of it." He said it all with the obvious desire to dismiss the matter promptly. I nodded in disappointment, made no reply, nodded once more, and went out.

I was to begin on Monday. This was Saturday. So I still had a day and a half of freedom. I hastily bought sausages and a bottle of

red wine for Mother, went to the station without thinking what I was doing, and thence home. When I left the train at Starnberg and boarded the steamer I finally felt less depressed. Now at last I was capable of thinking, and I regretted all that I had done.

My family were sure to have heard of my trickery with the inheritance, so I thought. There'll be dissension and reproaches, and then a total breach. Why the devil have I come! I felt like a criminal who cannot control his anxiety. I wanted to throw something off, and did not even know what.

But nothing particular happened. Emma had told me in her letters of the changes that had taken place at home. The same thing had happened again as when Max married. After wrangling and quarrels with my brother's widow, Emma and Theresa returned with Mother to the little house which they had rented previously. This time they had taken it on lease and started a little dressmaking business, as they had done before, combined with millinery. Mother kept house, Theresa trimmed hats and made dresses under Emma's instructions, who was now absolutely bedridden.

My mother was standing at the fire-place and stirring the chicken-feed in a bubbling pot when I entered the small, low kitchen. She had just scrubbed all the floors and her skirt was still wet up to the knees.

"Hm. That you? Did you come on the one o'clock boat?" she said in her everyday voice.

"Good God! He come?!" said Theresa at that moment, standing in the door of her sewing-room, and she scanned me from head to foot. And Emma's feeble voice called from her bed upstairs. "Oskar? Is that you? Come up right away!"

I put down my coat and portmanteau and went up to her. She was lying on the white pillows, pale and terribly thin, and gasping for breath. She smiled feebly, but grew animated as soon as she saw me.

"Oh, lad! You're as smart as a new pin!" she cried, and admired my new suit. "Wherever did you get all that money? You can't save as quickly as that?" And she repeated again and again: "You do look nice! Really nice!"

I saw that they had not an inkling of the money-lending affair, so my spirits rose and I told all manner of tales about my sudden acquisition of wealth. She listened and looked completely happy. Then she grew thoughtful.

"Yes," she said at last, "you're a love-child. Perhaps you'll be a famous man yet."

She was exhausted with so much talking. She sank back into her pillows and began to cough; and her coughing grew worse and worse. Great red spots appeared on her wasted cheeks.

"It'll soon be all over with me — The doctor said I was consumptive through and through, the last time he came," she gasped indifferently, and added: "You needn't give me the rest of the money —" She spat out thick phlegm with an effort, and each time she said: "Do you see? It's red. That's all from my lungs." At last she lay back panting again and stared at the ceiling. I did not speak. Her chin quivered the least bit. Slowly the tears gathered in her dark, deep-set eyes. She pressed her thin, bloodless lips together.

"Yes, yes," she repeated after a while with the same sad gaiety, and she seemed to be talking to herself: "Yes, yes, you'll see. Shortly there'll be an end of me." I was glad that Mother called me down to coffee at this juncture. I rose hurriedly.

"Oh, nonsense! You're not going to die! You'll recover all right!" I burst out stupidly, and left the room.

Downstairs we said very little over our coffee.

"Emma looks very ill," I said once. Theresa did not answer, and Mother looked distressed. We could not find anything to say. Mother wanted to know whether I ever went to church, and she told me in passing that Moni — that was the name of Max's widow — would like to marry again.

"Then the property will pass into other hands?" I asked casually, and Mother sighed: "Yes," and wiped her wet eyes with her apron. Theresa went back to her sewing, and Mother prepared the feed for the chickens. I looked round the room. Everything here was narrow and low, depressing and poverty-stricken. It was quite different in

the house where we were born. There it was spacious and comfortable. Here we all got in one another's way. At last I rose uneasily and went up to Emma again. I took leave of her with forced cheerfulness, and shortly afterwards I left the cottage. I arrived in the city utterly wretched and at sea. Nanny had asked me to come and see her when I returned and tell her about Emma. But I did not go. Nor did I start work on the Monday. I let everything slide. It was as if one chapter were closed, and no new one begun. After a few days I wrote again to the master baker and sent my landlady with the letter. I said that I had made up my mind to undergo the operation, and was "unfortunately obliged for family reasons to leave the position"; I asked him soon to send my certificate of discharge from the army and a testimonial. The woman was hardly out of the house when I was again regretting what I had done. I thought of running after her, but let her go.

After that I went constantly to the Public Library, just to have some sort of occupation; I borrowed books, carried them home, and returned them unread. One evening I went to see Selma Igl. She was delighted. She had a nice room and all manner of books. She raved about Cäsar Fleischlen and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. Her room was warm, and she had mince and sausages—a rare luxury in wartime. She was accountant to a gravestone cutter whose business was flourishing in those days. She took piano lessons in her leisure time and was buying a piano on the part payment plan. She played classical music to me the whole evening. I did not know the pieces, but she said they were. I professed great admiration, though I have never had the slightest appreciation of music.

After that we often met.

Quite unexpectedly a letter came from Schorsch asking me to go to Selma and tell her he was getting married.

"And if you were a real good fellow, you could help me," he wrote. I went to Selma. She too had received a letter and was crying bitterly. I tried to comfort her. It was in vain. At last she began to sob. I was utterly helpless. I was filled with a pity foreign to my nature as I listened to her heart-rending moans. I sat

awkwardly beside her and thought again and again of that sentence in Schorsch's letter.

I could not make head or tail of it.

"I am utterly alone now! Utterly alone!" Selma shrieked again all of a sudden.

"Good God! Yes, indeed! But in fact we are all alone — every human creature is alone! The world is made that way! But you have a piano and books? — And — I'll come round and see you sometimes," I said, and wanted at last to get away. Then she began to sob again. In the end I stayed.

When I left her early the next morning, I had promised to marry her. That's what he must have meant by that sentence, I thought sullenly all the way home.

In my room I sat sleepily down at the table and wrote to Berg for the papers necessary for my marriage. I wrote home in vague terms, and as my landlady and her family always showed annoyance at the "lady's visits," I gave notice and moved to Schwabing.

We were married shortly afterwards. The marriage was unhappy from first to last.

Bad Luck and Bad Company

IT WAS A STRANGE BEGINNING. About four weeks before our marriage I spent the last of my money on renting a room in Schwabing. We were to live in it together; I arranged everything with the landlady when I moved in, and she agreed.

It was still the depth of winter and bitterly cold. I caught cold and developed cystic catarrh, but did not take much notice of it. When I woke on the second day I suddenly saw that I had wet the bed. I sprang out of bed, overcome with shame and alarm. I put on a clean shirt, pulled on my clothes hastily, and wrung out the wet sheet. Whatever happened I did not want my landlady to notice anything. I kept as silent as a mouse till finally at midday Selma came from the office to see me.

"Oh, Selma! — Just think — I have — I am ill! I don't know what's the matter — Go at once and fetch a doctor," I whispered to her. She questioned me in alarm, and I told her hurriedly. She went straight for the doctor. Meantime I did my best to put the bed to rights and lay down in it. It seems that my strange behaviour had already struck my landlady and her family, for they had been shuffling about suspiciously in the passage for some time and whispering. But at the moment I did not mind that, though it would have been extremely awkward if, for instance, one of them had come in and asked what was the matter. What, indeed, could I have said in my confusion? I should have been bewildered, should have flushed red and certainly stammered out the answer: "Excuse me, I — I have wet the bed! It — it — I don't know — it just happened all of a sudden —"

But that never occurred to me at the moment. I was troubled by very different thoughts. I reflected on my dissolute life in the past, on the prostitutes and cabarets and all the nights of lust. There, I thought sullenly to myself, there, now you've done it, you swine! Now you're infected and ruined for life! You've got your deserts, you filthy worm!

But I was overcome with horror when I thought of Selma. You'll have infected her, too! We shall both die miserably! There! That's your doing!

At last Selma came with the doctor, and waited outside in the passage while he examined me. I had sat up in bed, and now I gazed helplessly at the doctor.

"Doctor?" I asked in a subdued voice. "For God's sake, tell me, doctor, am I infected? I am going to be married — am I venereally diseased? That — that's my fiancée outside!"

The doctor examined me thoroughly, asked question after question, and smiled at last. I gazed at him in perplexity and was utterly at sea.

"No, no, Mr. Graf," he now answered quietly, and he seemed to be positively amused at me. "No, there's nothing serious. You're not venereally diseased. You have only got a bad chill, and you must not drink so much before going to bed; do you understand? A slight cystic catarrh — it does sometimes cause bed-wetting. The most important thing is to keep warm, and perhaps you had better stay in bed several days, and take this medicine three times a day. Do you see?"

"Then I'm really not venereally diseased? You're quite sure?" I asked, still doubtful, for I had in fact thoroughly accustomed myself to the idea of my supposed malady. Such a rapid change was too much for me. The doctor could not refrain from smiling again, and asked whether I had often wet the bed, and when I said: "No," he replied sarcastically:

"You need not distress yourself, you can marry, Mr. Graf. It will soon be all right." Then he took leave. I felt like a ransomed soul.

"It's nothing," I said to Selma, and told her everything. But my landlady had already grown so suspicious, that she returned the rent and said to Selma she would prefer me to move out that very day. I could read in her face that she shrank from me with disgust. I got up and looked about, and this time I took two rooms for the same rent a few houses further along the street. My new landlady was a skinny old girl with the face of an eagle, and she had a son about eight years old.

"Yes," she said, speaking in the genuine, harsh Swabian dialect, "I will make an exception. As I said, I have had to do with respectable people. Your wife can join you after you are married." And then she scanned me again with extraordinary interest, and repeated: "I hope I am getting decent, honest lodgers; eh, Mr. Graf?"

"Yes, certainly, certainly," I answered with an air of ready confidence, and she was satisfied. And when I was alone she really was friendly, but whenever Selma came she underwent a ridiculous transformation. She would not leave us alone for a moment. She always made some excuse to come in, poked about, and went out again looking almost affronted, only to return in a few minutes. These entries and exits became a perfect nuisance. Selma was annoyed. I pacified her. Everybody had some bee in their bonnet, I used to say. She would stop when once we were married. Meantime, the landlady seemed to grow more and more nervous as the time approached. She had one characteristic that was really dreadful: she was — if I may use the expression — destructively clean. Every day, every hour, she found some fresh ground for complaint. She had hawk eyes. And when a man is perpetually under the eyes of authority, his hand gets quite shaky. Once I sat down at the table to write a letter, but forgot to take off the cloth, and made a blot that it was impossible to conceal. The honest dame discovered it at once. She called me to account in a positive frenzy of triumph. It was queer, she generally spoke in something of a whine, but now the transformation was complete.

"Mr. Graf!" she cried, beginning rather more gently. "I must

tell you at once, you'll have to replace the cloth. I'm a lone woman! I can't afford it myself, not in a lifetime." When I suggested that it might wash out, there was an end of amiability.

"What?! — What do you say? — Wash out? — No, Mr. Graf, no! I've no use for lodgers like that!" she resumed, and this time her manner was much more violent. She rattled on so that I could make no reply. I always hated quarrels. Finally I promised to pay for the cloth, and discussed the matter with Selma that evening. She was furious. I had the greatest difficulty in calming her anger. We had not a halfpenny left. At last I resolved to take some things to the pawnshop next day and settle the affair.

The landlady regarded me with an air of suspicion and almost menace when I went out with the parcel next day. In the street I met Hobrecker, who was delighted at our unexpected meeting. He had long ago forgotten how I boxed his ears. He was heart and soul my friend at once. I told him everything hastily. He was round-eyed with astonishment at my intended marriage. He accompanied me to the pawnshop and then back home. Mrs. Ulbrich — that was the landlady's name — was already waiting. I paid all that I owed, and for a few days there was peace once more.

And now Hobrecker visited me every day. He often came quite early and told me about his "financial activities." He too was to come into some money, and he wanted to get cash as I had done. But it did not seem to be so simple a matter, and I could not understand his explanations. In any case, he said, he had already taken legal steps.

For the moment he was an insurance agent. Some shady agency had engaged him. He promptly looked up all his former benefactors, and with his usual skill played the part of the honest disabled soldier who was at last in prosperous circumstances; and he went on persuading them till they took out an insurance policy. He pocketed their premiums at once and without another thought spent them on himself. In this way he lived gaily, frequented the best restaurants, and spent every evening in the artists' club, "Simplicissimus." He talked everywhere of the fortune he was coming into, and people

believed him and gave him credit; even the waitresses occasionally lent him money. I envied him. Selma hated him.

He took me every evening to "Simplicissimus," and there I made the acquaintance of a great number of people. Artists, cabaret dancers, bankrupts, clever pimps, drunkards, drug victims, courtesans, illicit traders, students, girls engaged in handicrafts, and pacifist poets. Everyone made his way according to his own ideas. We discussed ethics, humanity, and art, besides soaps and other illegal wares, which were offered in wagon-loads. We borrowed from one another. There was gossip and business, love-affairs and monomanias, morphia and cocaine. Each one of us sat in judgment on the rest, though indeed we merely expressed opinions and expected the others to listen. We were, so to speak, swimming down the stream of time and clinging to our own nonentity.

Now and again one paid for all, because he was after one of the cabaret girls, and then after closing time the whole company repaired to a studio, laden with wine and spirits, where there was frenzied dancing, drinking, and discussion. I thoroughly enjoyed it all, and besides—a man must be acquainted with the circles where art is produced, he must know his way about. I regarded it as the beginning of a literary career.

But this kind of life cost money, and day after day I took things to the pawnshop, in order to keep up with it. I never came home at night. My landlady watched my conduct suspiciously. She grew daily more hostile.

Soon I had nothing more to pawn. Luckily I made the acquaintance of Marietta, a slip of a girl with an adventurous past who used at that time to recite poems in "Simplicissimus" and was well known to all the artists. She went with me every evening after closing-time, told me all manner of tales, and often gave me the last of her money. I felt myself exalted as an artist by an acquaintance of this kind and wholly forgot my matrimonial affairs. I was absolutely cut off, absolutely lost in this "sphere."

But at last the wedding-day came. Selma asked for an advance on her salary, we redeemed from pawn what was most essential,

and set up housekeeping together. Selma was at her business by day, and I wrote poetry; and as several journals had printed my work, I indulged in the most rose-coloured dreams. But the first of the month came round and we could not pay our rent. Once more I made up a parcel and was off to the pawnshop. But this time Mrs. Ulbrich planted herself at the door with a menacing air and would not let me pass.

"Where are you going? You shan't go out till you have paid!" she screamed, and her face was as white as a sheet.

"Damn your eyes, where do you suppose I am going? To the pawnshop. So as to pay you!" I bellowed, and turned upon her. "Get out of my way and let me go!"

"No, I say I won't. I won't have it!" she snarled, and she planted herself against the door. I was overcome with rage.

"What!" I bawled louder still, and I pushed her aside. The bell rang. I flung open the door. Hobrecker stood outside. I rushed out and pulled him with me. The landlady shouted after us.

When we returned in about half an hour both rooms were cleared right out. The Ulbrich woman had annexed all our possessions. I went to her to inquire, but I could not get in a word.

"There!" she spluttered. "Now I'm safe. I shan't give up the things till you've paid, you can take that, you — you —"

Her thin voice rose to a shriek and broke off.

"There's the money! I will move out this very day! Give me back my things at once, or I'll call in the police!" I exclaimed vehemently, and suddenly I broke into mocking laughter.

"Indeed?! Yes! And what about the pail that you broke? And the curtain that you spoiled? Pay for everything and then you can go and I'll give back your things. Not before!" she declared, and stalked into the bedroom where she showed me the slop-pail, which was slightly cracked, and the curtain, that was a little frayed. She held stubbornly to her demand for compensation.

"No, I won't pay for that! Give me my things!" I repeated resolutely. "I am going at once to call in the police! We shall see!"

And I left her there and ran out with Hobrecker and fetched the nearest policeman. He merely declared it was no business of his, but at last, after much persuasion, he followed us. He left the shouting woman, however, without effecting anything. I detained him: "What if I just go for her and take the things by force? What will happen then?"

He shrugged his shoulders indifferently and said: "You can do that, but she can summon you for a breach of the peace in the house. You'd better pay and move out." And he went away.

So that was all the State was good for! "Pay," he had said, "and you'll be left in peace. If you resist, you'll be punished. One way or the other, you've got to pay."

I locked the door of the room and consulted Hobrecker.

"I haven't another penny. There's nothing to do but go for this brute of a woman, take the things, and be off — or else I must just pay. Hm." I said, and added anxiously: "What am I to do with Selma? She's upset already with all this moving about."

My companion smiled wryly.

"Hm. Bad luck! The joys of marriage!" he joked. I lost my temper.

"Oh, for God's sake! You ass! Don't play the fool!" I snapped at him. "We must arrange things more or less before Selma comes. What do you think? I suppose you haven't any money?"

"No — one mark and twenty pfennigs is the sum total of my fortune," he replied shrugging his shoulders, and now he seemed to be turning the matter over in his mind. We stood there for a while in perplexity.

"I know," said Hobrecker suddenly, and looked as if the most brilliant idea in the world had occurred to him. "Let me have a look at you." He surveyed my suit and my shoes. He scanned me from head to foot.

"We can get twenty marks for them. I know a pawnshop — A first rate fellow, really decent! Look here, take off your clothes and go to bed for the time being. I will pawn the whole lot and come back directly; we'll pay her and then pawn the sequestered goods,

and it will be all right. Do you understand? I will tell the man to put the suit and shoes aside, and that I will come for them soon. What do you say?" So he expounded his scheme.

I reflected. I had to pay the landlady twenty-seven marks. He could take my hat as well, so he said, and he thought my pocket-book had a value.

"Right," I said, and acted on the plan. Hobrecker took my keys and went off with the things. I got quickly into bed and waited. I was cold and pulled the coverlet right up. The harsh singing of the Ulbrich woman penetrated the walls. She sang extraordinarily loud, and it seemed to me that there was a note of hysterical triumph in her voice. I dreamed of revenge, and the most romantic schemes occurred to me. Time slipped past. I grew more and more nervous. I thought of Selma. She was ill now, quite shattered in health. Good Lord! God! What had I done? Why had I ever made a beginning with her? I had neither loved nor hated her — I had married her because of a quarter of an hour's compassion, and had brought all this misery upon us both.

Why had I not simply left her that night, simply run away?

My whole world was horrible.

I would talk to Selma this very day. I saw the whole situation clearly. But that was impossible! You *must*, I said stoically to myself, it all has to be. Perhaps just because you lived so thoughtlessly before.

I heard the keys creak in the outer door. I did not know the time and was afraid it might be Selma. But it was Hobrecker. I heard the Ulbrich woman disputing with him outside in the passage. But she was helpless when pitted against William Hobrecker of Remscheid; he was a marvel, a phenomenon.

"But my dear lady! Do be calm! Don't get so excited, little woman," I heard in his inimitably soothing voice which drowned the landlady's scolding, and he added in the wonderful rich tone that had won him so much confidence: "There is your money. People must behave properly. Yes, yes, you're quite right. My friend is ill. He has gone to bed. Surely you don't expect me to

leave him like that? Do be reasonable, little woman! Of course Mr. Graf will have back his things, won't he? There now!"

And sure enough, he succeeded where my fury and anger had failed. The Ulbrich woman grew calm and my friend came into the room smiling. I jumped out of bed.

"Have you done it all? My dear fellow!" I cried, deeply touched, and he nodded.

"Everything. Here are some cigarettes. She has cooled down," he answered, and as I was full of his praises, he became self-assured and wanted to settle the whole affair with the Ulbrich woman. All I need do was to be quiet, he would soon settle it, and then — off we would go, he said. I gave him a free hand. But he returned in a few minutes.

"What do you say? A minute ago the brute was reasonable enough — You've got to beg her pardon and then give notice, she says — She won't have any dealings with me, the toad!" he announced. My patience was at an end. I was out of bed in a single leap.

"Take off your clothes! Get into bed for the moment! We'll see!" I shouted, beside myself with rage. He complied promptly. I got into his clothes. They were much too small for me. I bounced into the kitchen.

"Well, what more do you want, Mrs. Ulbrich?" I shouted. "Will you give up the things voluntarily, or shall I smash up the whole place for you — at once!" I was trembling with rage. She screamed and gesticulated. The child ran for a policeman.

"You didn't give notice!" she persisted.

"Out with the things! Where are they! Out with them!" I bel-lowed, and as I did not see them in the kitchen, I rushed to her bedroom door, hurled myself against it, and pushed the screaming, scratching shrew aside: "Open at once or there'll be trouble! I tell you for the last time! Now then! Open!"

The Ulbrich woman drew herself up.

"Very well," she said, and opened the door, "fetch your rubbish! The police will get you all right. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you, you — you scoundrel!"

I took no notice of her, but gathered up the things and carried them across to our room.

"Swindler!" she shouted, looking in at the open door. She paused for a moment and then whirled into the room, like a flag waving in the wind, came right up to Hobrecker in the bed, and then really let loose.

"Ah! Now I see how you carry on with your friend. I—I won't have it—I know all about it! I'll tell your wife! I—I'll tell the police. It's filthy—You have relations with men! You—you perverted creature!" She stormed; her words were like a bubbling fountain of scandal; she tore her hair and threatened to attack Hobrecker, who burst out laughing; and when she saw that it all had no effect, she rushed out of the room like a fury.

"Well!" I exclaimed, shaking my head, and could not myself refrain from laughing.

"Oh, yes, that's the lower middle-class. They're the most immoral in the world!" said Hobrecker with an air of worldly wisdom, and he shuddered as he got out of bed. The suit changed hands once more. Hurriedly we bundled together the goods destined for the pawnshop, and then listened for a few minutes. When we heard plates clattering in the kitchen, Hobrecker opened the bedroom door noiselessly, I ran on and tore open the front door, and with one bound he was off.

After a while the landlady's little boy came back. It seems that the policeman had told him, too, that disputes about lodgings were no affair of his. The Ulbrich woman was howling again loud enough to bring down the heavens. I was delighted at her failure. I changed my mind once more in the twinkling of an eye, and was all for the State. I rejoiced triumphantly that it would not listen to the complaints of every old shrew.

When my friend returned I flew like the wind to the front door. My landlady did the same. We bounced against each other like two well blown-up footballs. She rebounded to the wall with a groan, and held her hands to her head, whimpering. Before she had time to collect her thoughts we were back in the room and had bolted the

door. She battered it with her fists like a mad woman, but we took no notice. We collected all my possessions. Then we marched one after the other, like heavily laden donkeys, past the furiously gesticulating Ulbrich woman and out of the house. All the other tenants had opened their doors and followed us with black looks. Down below, in the street we put down our burdens and took counsel. "Very well, then, you'll wait here with our things and stop Selma from going upstairs. Meanwhile, I will look round for rooms," I said to Hobrecker, and disappeared round the corner. I took a room with two beds in Schelling Street, on the third floor. Everything was thick with dust. The room smelt musty. Nothing was in order. The old, white-haired landlady was almost servile in her amiability when I said: "Very well, I will take the room. I shall move in right away." She agreed with an air of confusion and set to work at once with nervous zeal.

When I returned to Hobrecker, Selma was with him.

"It's all settled! Don't be upset. I've got a nice room," I exclaimed, and we set off.

When we arrived our new landlady was still more agitated. She had hurriedly dusted the furniture and put things somewhat to rights. "I'll turn out the room to-morrow," she whimpered, and disappeared. Hobrecker, too, took leave. I promised to come round to him the next day. Steaming with perspiration, I began to unpack and arrange our things. Selma crouched on one of the beds, a broken-down little heap of misery, and cried.

"Do lie down! Just take a rest! It will all come right again! — Good Lord, it's just happened! Come, get into bed!" I said to her soothingly. She undressed mechanically and lay down. I hastily hung a few pictures on the walls, and went to bed myself.

Selma's sighs and moans penetrated the darkness; then she began to cough, sat up, and struggled for breath, and at last, when the attack was over, she fell heavily back onto the pillow and burst into unrestrained, loud, despairing sobs.

"Selma! Selma! For God's sake, be calm! — I'm upset about it myself; do be calm!" I said tenderly and caressed her with a

shaking hand. There was a weight on my heart. Gradually she grew calmer.

I lay in bed as straight as a rod and gazed ceaselessly into the darkness. A church clock struck nearby. I could not sleep. Suddenly I felt sharp pricks on my feet, and scratched them. It grew worse. Selma was scratching as well. With a heavy sigh she turned over on the other side and began again to scratch and scrape and rub. By now my whole body was itching.

"Gosh! Bugs!" we whispered to each other. I got up and switched on the light. When we turned up the bedclothes the loathsome black insects were crawling everywhere.

"Good Lord! That too!" exclaimed Selma and dropped onto the cold floor. She was at the end of her tether. For a moment I was at a loss what to do. Then I packed all our things again and began to swear horribly. We heard a whimpering in the next room, then someone shuffling along the passage; a yellow light shone through the opaque glass in the door, and the landlady announced herself. Selma slipped into her clothes. I opened the door and began to swear. The old woman stood in her dressing-jacket and entreated our pardon. She brought back the rent at once and begged me to say nothing.

All night we walked to and fro, leaned against the furniture for a few minutes, looked out of the window, and waited and waited. At last the grey light of morning appeared. We heard the trams, the clatter of shutters being rolled up in the shops, the wheels of carts, steps, and voices. Selma washed and went to business. I started looking for rooms. An acquaintance at "Simplicissimus" had told me of a studio a few days earlier. I went and took it. It was a large, light, pleasant room with a little closet opening out of it. It contained the most essential furniture, and there was no landlady; we rented it direct from the owner of the house.

I went to Hobrecker, breathless and beside myself with joy. We borrowed a two-wheeled hand-cart, and by midday the move was complete. I telephoned to Selma and announced the glad news to her. That evening she came home and dropped into a chair exhausted.

She cried and cried. I made no attempt to check her tears. "It's best so," I thought.

I went round putting things to rights. The owner of the house was a kindly woman and let us have the use of the furniture without payment. At last, at last, our own home, free and undisturbed. My heart bounded with joy and contentment. I was happy, really happy, about it. Now you can work, you can do and leave undone whatever you choose. You can begin a life of your own, I thought.

Suddenly I remembered Selma. That's right, I was a married man! I was no longer alone! For the first time I realized that someone was living with me, living with me every day. I turned and looked at her. She was cowering in her chair, worn out, broken down, her face swollen with crying.

"Bum luck! Bum luck!" I said. "But we're going to stay here now! You'll see, things will come right again! — To the devil with the whole literary crowd! In the end a man is always alone! — Come, let us go to bed! —"

Literary Beginnings

AND NOW I WITHDREW into myself more and more. I no longer went to "Simplicissimus" and did not answer when Hobrecker came to the door. All mankind had suddenly become hateful to me.

It seemed almost as if I meant to determine, once and for all, the course of my future life. I was cramped by poverty and there were few avenues of escape. Literary work was more than uncertain, and my experience at taking positions was not inviting. But I had to get money at all costs: in the first place to put an end to the everlasting process of pawning, and secondly to provide some kind of tolerable basis for our marriage.

Money: that was the Alpha and Omega, whichever way I turned. Money was my joy and sorrow. As time went on, money really became something like a demon ruling our lives. It was all nonsense, what poets and philosophers said about morality and ethics and strength of character, of idealism, and God knows what else in the way of noble qualities. In the last resort those qualities were subsidiary to money, which created them or annihilated them. Man had invented something to which, sooner or later, he gave himself over unresisting, body and soul. If he had no money, he was nothing; if he possessed it or earned a good salary, then it was easy for him to be virtuous and humane.

Realizing this, I began slowly to look round for opportunities. Before the war I had learnt typewriting in Munich, and had been on fairly good terms with the teacher. I looked him up again and he allowed me to type my own manuscripts at the lessons, on paper that I brought with me. This teacher sometimes heard of vacancies

in offices; perhaps he could get me a job. But nothing came of it. The editors continued to return my contributions, Selma's salary was not enough for us both, and I began to pawn again. I was terribly anxious.

About this time an advertisement appeared in the newspaper of an export bookseller who sold books on the instalment plan. As soon as the first instalment was paid, the whole set was delivered complete. An idea occurred to me that promised salvation. I made inquiries. It was all exactly as stated in the advertisement. I pawned my umbrella, and with the proceeds I ordered the collected works of Heinrich Mann. In two days I received the six volumes bound in half cloth. I promptly sold them at the nearest second-hand bookseller's. It all went smoothly. I proceeded to plan a vast scheme of purchases. I took no notice of Selma's objections.

Well, then, what could I get from the export bookseller? Heinrich Mann's works, Nietzsche's works, Dostoevsky's works, *The Universe and Man* — all salable goods, for which the second-hand bookseller paid good prices. I was already counting on large profits.

"I daresay you will soon be able to give up going to business," I said triumphantly to Selma, but she only shrugged her shoulders dubiously and always replied: "Yes, but how are you going to keep up the everlasting monthly instalments later on?" "That? — Oh, that will be all right!" I said to soothe her, and I never gave the matter another thought.

I ordered quantities of books through acquaintances, to whom I handed over the money for the first instalment, and my time was fully occupied with selling. Selma's face grew more and more anxious, but I bought all kinds of things and tried in this way to accustom her to the benefits of my business transactions.

I met two artists and persuaded them to receive books on my behalf. They both said: "Yes, of course," with a magnificent air. I gave them money for the initial payment. One of them received a visit of inquiry; the bookseller wished to know whether the purchaser was really in a position to pay. After that the man was

scared and gave up the book business. The other spent the money on himself.

This inquiry had made me uncomfortable. I did not like having all the purchasers living so near one another. It necessarily gave rise to suspicion. But where had I any acquaintances outside Schwabing?

Suppose I went to Nanny? She knew that I was married, but she never came to see us. At home they knew nothing. No, it was no good going to Nanny; her name was Graf, too.

Suddenly I resolved to go home — because I had a little money. I wanted to find out what my family thought about Selma. As it happened, it was Saturday. Selma came home from business at one o'clock. We agreed not to say that we were married, and then we set out.

I was ill at ease when I entered the little cottage again, but I put on a cheerful air and played the successful man of the world. I carefully avoided being alone with Theresa. I read in her eyes that she had much to say to me — and much that was disagreeable.

It was just as it had always been at home. Mother worked, made the coffee, and said what she usually said. They had made a bed for Emma in an easy chair in the workroom. She raised her head, gazed at me, gazed at Selma, and then at me again.

"Yes," she said to Selma, "you know Oskar is constantly in need of a mother, or a wife who will be a nursemaid to him — till he learns more sense. Perhaps he will be quite different when once he outgrows it — Nobody is happy with him — We Grafs all have a bee in our bonnet, but he's the worst."

"Yes, I've noticed that," Selma smiled. We carried Emma in her chair outside the back door and talked with her. It was a lovely warm day. The sky was clear and blue. The starlings twittered in the leafless trees. The sun shone brightly. The air was aromatic, full of the heavy scent of earth freshly turned by the plough.

"This is the most dangerous season for me," said Emma, and she breathed with difficulty. She gazed at me again, as if to say: "What new folly have you committed?"

Her face was still more emaciated. It looked as though nothing but the transparent skin were covering the delicate bones. The resignation, at once gay and sad, which is peculiar to the dying, shone in her eyes. She was still talkative and vivacious. She was interested in everything — the movements of the armies, the new fashions, cooking, and the speeches in the Reichstag. She read a great deal; for what else could she do now?

"Yes," she said thoughtfully, "I like Scheidemann. He may prove to be a real statesman. Not long ago in the Reichstag he quoted the phrase: 'Guard your hearts even more watchfully than your gates' — That's beautiful. But I like Bethmann-Hollweg even better. He is a true public servant. He is not vain, he's sound to the core." We talked about all manner of things. She seemed to like best to stray away from the present, and it did us good to sit beside this peaceful soul. With her I forgot everything ugly and repulsive.

And now Selma began to cough and gasped for breath. Emma was taken aback and asked what was the matter with her. Then for a moment she puckered her smooth brow a little.

"You oughtn't to marry, Miss Igl — certainly not *him*," she said in her feeble voice, and looked anxiously at me. She laid her head back in the puffed-out cushions and gazed silently at the sky. Her face was sorrowful. "Oh, well, everybody must decide for himself what he ought to do," she murmured. And after a pause she said: "Life is so short, and just as you think it is beginning, it is all over —"

She was pensive now. We left her alone and went to the kitchen. We stayed over-night. I slept in Maurus's room, and Selma with Theresa. She had another bad attack of asthma. Everybody was disturbed, and next day Mother said aside to me when we were not observed: "You can't marry her. She's seriously ill." I nodded in embarrassment and was anxious to go. We took leave without telling them that we were husband and wife. Theresa came with us to the steamer. When we were on board and were starting off, we called out: "Mr. and Mrs. Graf thank you kindly for your hospitality." Theresa stared in astonishment and laughed a bewildered laugh.

Next day I wrote a letter of explanation, and a wedding-present of twenty-five marks arrived.

"You must manage for yourself now; we have never been able to guide you," so ran the letter from home. "We wish all happiness to you and your wife, and hope that you will live honest lives." Mother had written below in her crooked, laboured hand: "Dear Oska, i have had truble with my children and work from morning till nite till I cum to my grave. Say your prayers and go to confession sometimes and gro into an onest man. Luv, Mother."

Selma was not there when I read this. I walked to and fro in the large studio. I was on the verge of tears. I saw ruin on all sides. It seemed as though I had entangled myself in an invisible net, which held me fast, and from which there was no escape. A knock came at the door. I ran and opened it. Hobrecker stood there laughing and came in.

"What do you want?" I shouted at him. "What do you all want with me?!" He asked all manner of questions and wanted to know what was the matter. I did not answer.

"My dear fellow, I can see you're in a tight corner," he said after a while. "There's a way out — You can get something out of the Red Cross — Just go to them — And — and, by the way, there's a war fund for the professional classes — Oho! I picked up something there — It's child's play."

"I won't have anything more to do with this begging, I'm looking for work!" I bellowed, but Hobrecker was unperturbed. He told me that there was a man with a long nose at the Red Cross, a sort of Germanic artist fellow with literary interests. I should be sure to get something out of him. And as for the War Fund, there was a crowd of motherly females there; they might even find me a position.

I began to listen. He gave me a cigarette. I was pacified and made tea, while he fetched bread and artificial honey. I read my poems to him and showed him what had been printed.

"You must take all that to the Red Cross and the War Fund," he counselled me. "They're sure to be caught by anything printed."

He gave the addresses. When he left I felt more cheerful. I did not, however, want to go to the Red Cross and the War Fund, so I tried humble and pathetic letters. A few days later I received printed cards from both by the same post, asking me to call. I set out anxiously.

At the Red Cross office I gave my name, assuming the air of an honest peasant in distress.

"So you were a workman? A baker? And now you are writing?" inquired the man whom my comrade had described, and he regarded me through his glasses with interest. I showed all my published work. The fellow seemed greatly edified. He began at once to talk about literature, became friendly. I watched him closely.

In the Red Cross? Clearly a man of good standing? Possibly a doctor? Who knows what may come of it? So I reckoned, feeling my way.

He wanted to know what I thought about modern poets.

"Well, they all write such intellectual verse. That's not what I want to do," I said, divided between caution and self-assurance, and when I saw that he was greatly pleased with my answer, I added more boldly: "They're not real men, you know — they just lounge in the cafés."

A beggar develops remarkable intuitive powers; at the first glance he places the man he has to deal with. He scents his attitude of mind, the trend of his thoughts. I had hit the mark. This man grew more animated.

"Ah, yes," he said, "they've lost touch with the people." There was something of the honest parson, the German Lutheran, in his manner of saying it. He called the war the great adventure of the nations, the fountain of renewed vigour for all peoples. A new morality would arise out of it. I adapted myself perfectly to his outlook.

"Where were you at the front?" he resumed. "Was it very terrible?"

"Yes," I said, "but a man doesn't care to speak of it." Clearly he read into this the modesty of the genuine, tried hero, as I meant he should. He was quite prepossessed in my favour. He gave me thirty

marks. I had to sign a receipt. When I got up to go he invited me to come and see him again. He knew a professor who might be of service to me.

I was literally exulting as I ran down the steps. That is always the way: the smallest success is encouraging. I went straight to the War Fund. There I was received by a tall lady with grey hair and warts on her face, apparently an aristocrat. Her voice was masculine, and her eyes were penetrating. I had to tell her all sorts of things, and finally to fill in a form.

"I'm having a bad time, Madam," I said with an irresistible air of honesty. "But there are others worse off — One need only think of the men at the front — If you could help me this once."

I wanted to continue the tactics which I had adopted at the Red Cross.

The lady took the form I had filled in and glanced through it.

"So you are married?" she asked, and for the first time she smiled slightly. She looked at me with motherly eyes. I nodded. Then I, too, smiled hypocritically and humbly.

"What do you need most?" she asked. I assumed an air of shyness, and would not bring out a word.

"I have a few clothes. No doubt you need them?" she said without pausing, and she rose, went to a cupboard with sliding doors, and handed me a long dress-coat, a pair of drawers, and several ties. Though I was pretty severely disappointed, I thanked her obsequiously with the greatest pleasure. That carried her away.

"We will see if we can get you a position. Come in every Thursday, and please sign here — You will receive the money outside at the cash-desk," she said. This unexpected change transformed me visibly. I left the office with many clumsy bows and expressions of thanks, and again I received thirty marks. On the steps I slipped into the black dress-coat and put on a tie, for I did not want to appear in the streets with such an immense bundle of clothes. It made me look too much like a beggar.

I came home in triumph and told Selma.

"Sixty marks! Just think, sixty marks in a single day!" I ex-

claimed. Selma said nothing and showed me a warning letter from the export bookseller, which she had found in the letter-box. I made rapid calculations.

"Eight sevens are fifty-six," I sighed in disappointment. "Oh Lord, how silly."

"And that will go on for months," said Selma. I went gloomily to the post office and sent off the money.

Again I wrote for whole nights together. Selma slept in the ante-room. I tried to get reviewing for the literary pages of the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, and was successful. Dr. Kurt Martens was on the editorial staff. He sent a very friendly reply and asked me to go and see him in the editorial office. He gave me some books straight-way. I read them, wrote the reviews, and sold the books. Some little humorous stories and articles were accepted too. That encouraged me. I tried to get reviewing for the *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, and there, too, I was successful, but I had to give back the books with the reviews. I was paid from five to seven marks for such a review. I wanted to earn as much and as quickly as possible, and I gave up reading the books altogether. I just praised them, and that was all. I went to the booksellers' shops, got the publishers' announcements, and patched up something plausible. It was quite successful. Everything was accepted, only sometimes it was cut for lack of space, and as payment was reckoned by the lines, my calculations were generally at fault. That often annoyed me. But I said to myself: "Easily earned money. You've got one foot in the literary world."

Altogether my literary efforts seemed to be meeting with more success. For instance, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* printed a sketch describing one of my wartime experiences. Two days later a statement was printed in the same place from a Professor Oskar Graf, who said that he was not to be identified with the writer of the sketch; and I received letters from the editor and the professor asking me to change my name, because the latter was a war artist at headquarters and was under an obligation to publish nothing about the war. What a lot of notice I was attracting! I was pleased,

and promptly changed my name. Henceforward I called myself Oskar Graf-Berg. I did not like it, but one had to be considerate.

A little later I met an acquaintance from the artist set at "Simplissimus," the painter Carlo Holzer. He told me that all Schwabing disliked the new name. Holzer was a man who had absorbed Stefan George into his very marrow. Not only did he recite the poet's verses on every occasion, but there was something George-like in his voice and gestures. He was all for sound effects. He stood in the street deep in reflection, struck his puckered brow, reflected again, and exclaimed suddenly: "Oskar Graf-Berg. It's heathenish! Simply call yourself Oskar Maria Graf." He uttered the word "Maria" with broad deliberation and emphasis, as if he had discovered the profoundest secret in the world.

"Oskar — Maria — Graf," he repeated with sustained emphasis.

"My dear fellow! Fine! Oskar Maria Graf," I exclaimed enthusiastically, "that's good business. Now when I write twaddle I shall call myself Oskar Graf-Berg, and when I succeed in producing something decent, I shall call myself Oskar Maria! Splendid! First rate!" The painter was somewhat aghast at such a prosaic view, but he smiled and went on his way.

Yet with all my literary labours, I did not escape from financial embarrassment. The book orders had landed me in a regular kettle of fish. There seemed to be perpetual monthly instalments due.

Quarrels with Selma resulted.

I had often inquired about a situation at the office of the War Fund. One day when I called I was told to go in and see the lady on the committee. She said very pleasantly: "Go at once to 2 Caroline Place, to Privy Councillor Bruckmann. You may get the post of private secretary, if you satisfy him. I recommended you strongly."

I thanked her and went. All the way I revelled in romantic dreams; like earlier classical poets, I was going to be taken up by the best people. I pictured myself as a privileged, modest, young, and talented man in a circle of aristocratic ladies and gentlemen who took a great interest in me. In a word, a spacious and beneficent world stretched before me in imagination.

I reached the house in Caroline Place with my hopes pitched high. A gentleman with an air of sterling worth and knowledge of the world, his beard elegantly cut to half length, received me and explained his requirements. He seemed to like me.

"You will spend most of your time typing — But you can carry boxes as well, can't you? — You look strong," he said and held me spellbound with an unchanging, half-ironical smile that made me feel awkward.

"Oh, yes, I carried sacks at home as a boy of fourteen; I used to be a baker — And I worked in a mill and carried sacks weighing two hundredweight all day before the war," I replied readily. I wanted to make the best possible impression.

"Ah — yes, that's right," said my future chief with satisfaction. "Now then, sit down to the typewriter. We will see how you type."

I obeyed. But the typewriter had an altogether unfamiliar keyboard, and was an invisible writer. When the gentleman began to dictate, I trembled. I typed unsteadily and rapidly, to show how quick I was. I felt convinced that I was making one mistake after another. After a time the gentleman raised the rubber cylinder and looked at what I had written.

"Hm? — But you said you were quite a good typist?" he asked.

I flushed red, and faltered in confusion.

"Y-yes, but I have never used this machine — I don't know the keyboard — I should have to practice," I stammered, and looked helplessly at the gentleman.

"No, no. There's no time for that," he said curtly, and dismissed me.

I did not return to the War Fund to report. I was annoyed, and strolled round to the employment bureau at the Bakers' Lodge. There were no vacancies. I went there every day. In vain. The darkness gathered round me.

A Flash of Light in the Darkness

THE SUMMER CAME; the end of August. Already the dreamy atmosphere of autumn hung heavy in the air. I often sat irresolute on a bench in the park till five in the afternoon and stared at the busy life around me. I always had a book in my pocket, but I never read. I just gazed into vacancy. My mind was a blank. I did not want to think any more. Children romped in the park, women scolded, girls whisked past, old men sat and talked. The birds sang in the trees and the dull rumble of the streets sounded in my ears; everything went on as usual. If I shut my eyes I felt as though I were sitting in a warm glass case, with countless insects crawling and scratching on the sides: ceaselessly, with such irritating assiduity that it made me quite stupid. A clock struck nearby.

"Good Lord! Five o'clock already!" murmured an old man beside me.

"Oh, yes, time passes, you'd never believe it—I wonder how it will all end—A fellow daren't think about it, or he'd go and hang himself," said another wearily, and when I looked at him I saw that he had been mutilated in the war, and his face was horrible to look at. I rose and went. I waited apathetically in the studio till Selma came.

"Have you found anything?" she asked.

"No, there's nothing," I replied, shaking my head. We hardly spoke to each other. We were both depressed.

On one such evening I found a telegram in the letter-box. "Emma is dead, come, Theresa."

It seemed as though a gust of wind had swept the brains from my head; and then as if my head were filled with lead.

"Emma is dead, Emma is dead; mm, Emma is dead," I babbled again and again to Selma. She took the paper and read eagerly.

"Hm. Well, we haven't a halfpenny! You must go home," she said. "We can't buy a wreath, but you must go home."

I groped my way into the bedroom and hunted mechanically for anything that I could pawn.

I obtained five marks. Next morning early I went to Berg.

"Hm. She died so suddenly," was all I could find to say when I stood before Mother in the little kitchen. Theresa came. We merely looked at one another in silence.

"She's lying over in the mortuary," said Mother sadly, and she began to cry.

"Hm. So suddenly," I murmured dully. "So suddenly."

"She had a great deal to suffer," sighed Mother, turning to her work again. "And now it's all over. It's better so, better than for her to go on suffering." She wiped her eyes and gave me my coffee. "There, drink it —"

Then I heard how Emma had died. Mother was busy preserving damsons when the death-throes began. Theresa was dressmaking as usual. Emma was lying upstairs in bed in the room above the work-room, and she spoke up to the end. The metal-lined chimney had been opened out through the wooden floor, so that the invalid could be heard at any moment if she wanted anything.

"She was plucky," Mother told me, speaking of the dying girl. "When I took the soup upstairs, her face was already swollen and her body convulsed, but she didn't cry — She was plucky."

"Then when I began preserving the damsons, she said all at once: 'Oh, Mother, make good preserve, won't you! — I'm dying now! — Boil it slowly and give it a long time — And don't spare the sugar — It's nearly over — Make good preserve, Mother — I'm dying, and you'll be having something nice for the winter, but make good preserve — boil it for a long time, mind that — I shan't be here much longer — Where is Nanny, get through to Oskar on the

telephone — How much sugar have you taken, Mother? — Terry, Terry! Come up quickly, it's the end — ' ”

Theresa went upstairs and when Mother followed, Emma was already dead. Theresa showed me a slip of paper on which was written in pencil in a shaky hand: “ Everything belongs to Terry, good-bye, Emma.” She had just managed to write those words.

I read the message rather with a shudder than with sorrow, and said gloomily: “ Oh, yes, it's a matter of course that everything belongs to you.” I finished my coffee without many words. The house was oppressively silent. From time to time my mother sighed deeply.

As I sat there all the past recurred to my memory. I thought of the letter that Emma had once written after she was bedridden. “ Dear Oskar,” she said, “ I spend my time building castles in the air in my warm bed. Our cottage is very nice now, and they spoil me thoroughly. I always think that some day we shall all join together here and be cosy. Maurus will open a confectioner's shop next to Terry's millinery. Nanny will dress the ladies' hair, and you will help a bit and have a nice little attic where you can write poetry. We are all a little cracked, but life wouldn't be worth living if we weren't. You see, I'm at my day-dreams again. But that's what I love. When I die you must look in all the corners, dear Oskar, and perhaps there'll be a pile of money for you somewhere. Wouldn't that be jolly!

“ I have a new doctor from Perlach, a quack. He has prescribed a litre bottle of medicine for me. It's doing me good already. He says I shall be quite well in three months. But I don't believe it. Only I should like to see the lot of us peacefully united at home. . . . ”

I remembered her face, and her gaiety. My thoughts followed her through the whole course of her life: what a lovely girl she was, and what a coquette; how she was queen of the dance; how when I came back from Ticino and they all scolded me she once said warmly and tenderly: “ Good Heavens, just you take your place, Oskar, and don't let them turn you out — You have just as much right in the house as any of us. Nobody can chuck you out.”

And I remembered every word she had spoken that time to Selma and me. She had been lying in bed almost two years and had known all the time that every day brought her nearer to the grave.

It was all so vivid to me that I suddenly refused to believe she was dead, and then felt an oppressive weight on my heart when I realized with certainty that it was so.

I could not bear to stay in the house and went alone to Aufkirchen, up to the cemetery.

I stood hesitating outside the glass door of the mortuary. I only looked at the wreaths laid on the coffin, and a slight shudder passed over me.

There come moments — we want to wipe out the events of the past from our thoughts, we refuse to face them — but suddenly we look straight at them. I pressed my face against the glass door and lost all control of myself. Her shrunken breast and shoulders, clothed in a dress of stiff white lace, showed beneath the mass of wreaths. And then — I was cold now and began to weep, opening the door and entering the cool, desolate chamber — then I saw the withered, yellow neck; the slender head with its smooth, thin, black hair; the rigid face with its pale, bluish, transparent skin, already little more than a skeleton, the eyes half open, and two little folds round the thin, white mouth, as if a gentle smile had been sharply interrupted.

I gazed at the dead girl through my falling tears.

“Em-m-ma! Em-m-ma, Emma!” I stammered, and kept on sprinkling her body with holy water, simply to avoid seeing how my limbs trembled.

“Em-m-ma, Emma! Emma, Emma, won’t you ever come back to life, Emma?! ” I screamed suddenly, quite childishly, and I cried and cried. The church clock struck close by. I started in terror, was ashamed and dried my eyes, and then ran out of the mortuary. I crept out of God’s acre like a frightened schoolboy who has done something dreadful. I think I should have run away if I had seen anybody.

At last on the field-path to Kempfenhausen I walked more slowly

and grew calmer. I made my way up to the scanty trees which grow along the ridge at this point. We had often waged bloody wars there in the noonday recess with the children from neighbouring villages when we were boys. From there you can see far over the lake.

I dropped on the soft grass and gazed for long into the blue. The sky was very bright and distant. The land was bathed in a vast and heavy stillness. My body glowed with the summer heat. The birds sang in the trees, a confused sound of voices reached me from afar, crickets chirped, were silent, and began afresh. The clear bell of the boat sounded from the lake.

Emma lies up there, like anyone else, as we shall all lie some day. Tomorrow they will bury her, gradually she will crumble in the earth; her face, her eyes, her teeth will be turned to dust, to nothing; and my mother will turn over the earth on the grave every year on All Souls' day and plant geraniums or pansies and water them. The water will trickle down to the body, to the mouldering bones that the worms are gnawing. . . .

And people will say: "What beautiful flowers she's planted . . . lovely."

I was choking. My eyes were open, yet I saw nothing, but was lost in this single thought.

"Life is so short, and just as you think it is beginning, it is all over ——" I recalled Emma's words and saw her once more lying in bed and smiling sadly.

If it is like that all through, why should we live, if the very beginning makes the end certain? The thought rose from some obscure corner of my mind. A strange melancholy, which seemed to be a thing apart from reality, took gradual possession of me. Without thinking I took a piece of letter paper from my pocket-book and wrote on it:

The children we of bane,

Yet this our solace and our prayer in darkness and in bitterness
of death:

Our lot to die alone and scornéd of our fellows,

And yet we soar to thee, O God! thy mercy learning!
It cannot be that all the scattered seed,
Earth's flower and fruitful harvest, is for nought!
Deep in creation's womb the wheels of pain are turning
Through endless time, and all things dying breathe of tasks
fulfilled. . . .

And yet a day shall break long sought in vain —
Like pyramid from out dispelling mist —
A day of healing after years of pain,
And frenzy, and the curse of covetous desire.

I was in a perspiration now. The mood of sadness was past and gone. I felt something akin to sullen rebellion. I jumped up, looked across the fields and the lake, and grew calm. I felt unaccountably sure of myself.

Just outside the village I halted and suddenly, as if I were defending myself against somebody, exclaimed proudly yet childishly: "It's all untrue! — It's quite different!"

At home I saw Nanny again for the first time since my marriage; she had arrived from Munich during my absence. She was plunged in grief and cried unceasingly, so that I could not talk to her.

"Won't Maurus get time off?" I asked.

"Yes, he'll just come in time," said Mother.

"But he said he could not come in time for the funeral," said Terry.

We spoke little that evening. Each one avoided the others' eyes. No one wanted to talk.

Next day was the funeral. A number of relatives and friends came. Mother stood broken-hearted at the grave, Moni stood beside her crying as if she had lost her dearest, and Terry and Nanny followed her example and burst into tears. I stood by absently, and did not shed a tear. I was only annoyed that I had not been able to buy a wreath. Everyone scanned me critically and their looks were none of the kindest.

I had left home light-heartedly. It was not till I was back again in the city that the depression returned. At last, about a week later, I obtained work in Rauber's Bakery.

As usual, there was night-work, including Sundays. The great rooms in the factory were like the land of the dead. Only two furnaces were in use, the only workmen besides myself were an oven-hand (the head journeyman) and an apprentice. Rationing had reduced the consumption of bread. Formerly there had been ten assistants, and now we three managed it all. There was plenty to do. I had charge of two kneading-machines. The tables at which we worked were so placed that we stood with our backs to the furnaces. So we were slowly roasted. It was too hot to wear shirts. We worked in nothing but drawers, with the upper part of our bodies naked. The sweat dripped and boiled on our skin. My back was sore just as it had been at the mill. Tiny blisters appeared upon it. After a time they broke and smarted horribly. When I got home my shirt was stuck to my skin. I tore it off at a single pull and poured cold water down my back. That cooled the pain. But when I stopped it smarted and itched worse than ever. I slept lying on my stomach. Thank God, it was not yet autumn. In the hot studio I did not need a blanket, which I should have had to tear from my sore back when I woke up.

In the evening, when Selma came home, she wakened me. We sat together speaking little, and from time to time I glanced anxiously at her swelling body.

At about half past seven I went out.

We always had bread in those days.

10

Stirring Times

ONE DAY THE GENTLEMAN from the Red Cross met me in the street. I tried to avoid him, but he accosted me genially.

He wanted to know why they never had any news of me.

"I am at work again. I have gone back to baking," I said.

"Indeed, and do you write poetry in your free time?" he asked with interest.

I nodded.

"Can't you come and see us one day? Perhaps some evening?" he went on.

I shook my head: "No, that's just when my work begins."

"Ah, yes — well perhaps during the day?"

"I sleep in the daytime."

The gentleman surveyed me.

"Well, perhaps you could come some Sunday?"

"It's all the same, Sundays and week-days. I can't manage that either." This disconcerted him a little. He wanted to know what a baker's life was like.

"Hm," he said at last, "it certainly is hard — You ought to have lighter work." I regarded him with that concealed dislike which a workman always feels towards any ignorant person who questions him about such things. He noticed nothing, and began again about the professor who had expressed interest and might help me.

"You know it all comes from the depths with you, Graf," he said, speaking almost like a friend. "You write because you can't help it." He praised me and compared me with Gottfried Keller. Keller had been a Government clerk all his life, he said, and it was quite

a good thing for a poet to have work, because then everything that he "created" was founded on solid earth.

I nodded in reply to all that he said, and every now and then I spoke: "Oh, yes, certainly — quite so, quite so — oh, yes —" But I thought secretly: It's all very well for you to talk. You've got a fat income and can sit idle and tell other people who have to work hard on empty stomachs, how fine it is to slave for others. What does that concern me!

Nevertheless, I ended by promising to come and see him one afternoon.

I was fully occupied. I did not want on any account to give up reviewing. During the day I went to the editorial offices, fetched the books, and proceeded to the secretarial college to type my reviews; I did not get to bed till five or six o'clock, and at eight the night's work in the bakery began; it was a terrible rush. As I kneaded the dough I nodded from time to time, my eyes fell to and my arms refused to move. Sometimes the oven-hand complained. I was alarmed and pulled myself together violently when these fits of weakness came over me.

"It's too hard for you," the gentleman from the Red Cross had said. I reflected on his words and grew more and more irritated and sulky at my life of drudgery. I heard by chance that what were known as preliminary sorters were required temporarily at the general post office. I just stayed away from Rauber's, wrote a misleading letter asking for a testimonial and my certificate of discharge from the army, and about a week later I began work at the post office.

The conditions really were much better. Forty or fifty of us sat in a large room, and each had before him a rack divided into a number of partitions, into which he threw the letters as they were sorted. There were all kinds of people there: disabled soldiers, people of no occupation, impoverished persons of private means, casual workers, and intellectuals. Our hours of work were from eight in the morning till midday, when we were free till eight o'clock in the evening; then we worked again till midnight; or the alternative

shifts. What was so pleasant was that sometimes one had a day and a half free all at a stretch.

It was a sociable life, too. We could go slow. Five or six of us often stood together outside the lavatory, smoked cigarettes, and drove bargains. There were all kinds of things for sale: soap, butter, hoarded meat, watches, old suits, permits for purchase and bread-cards, shoes, and once even a suite of furniture. One man kept guard and warned us if one of our superiors was coming; the rest traded. A handshake completed the transaction. A signal from the scout, and we were in the lavatories in the twinkling of an eye. Inside we coughed and gasped, as if wholly occupied with the needs of nature. Once the danger was past, the trafficking began again.

I wanted to stay here. Perhaps you will satisfy them, they will keep you on, and you may become a postman without much difficulty, I reckoned.

After all, what had it all amounted to with these people who showed an interest in me? To carry boxes for Bruckmann! And who could tell what the professor might have demanded! Nobody troubles about anyone else in these days for nothing.

But to be a postman! There would be no drawbacks. I had always liked things brought by the post; and think of carrying letters from all quarters of the globe! An ideal life. A postman takes pleasant walks all day long, he need not wear himself out, he sees and hears everything that goes on, comes across much that is of interest, and is, moreover, a respected member of society. It seemed to me that this was the one suitable profession for me.

But my bad luck began again.

I had recently reviewed a book by Albrecht Schäffer for the *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*. But I mistook him for Wilhelm Schäfer, the Rhinelander, who had, I knew, lately celebrated his sixtieth or seventieth birthday. My review began with the words: "In this new book the venerable poet has once more given us a perfect flower of his mature and luminous art —"

The publishers wrote to the editor, who forwarded the letter to me. They said that "Mr. Albrecht Schäffer, described as a venerable

poet, is in the full vigour of his thirty-ninth year." The editor made no comment, but after that I was sent no more books.

One misfortune never comes alone. Some time previously I had sent an article to the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*. Time passed and it did not appear. I had written repeatedly to Dr. Martens, and at last I literally wrote every day. At first my letters were cautious, then I grew more peremptory. There was no answer, and no more books came. I grew impatient and resolved without more ado to appeal to the editor-in-chief. In reply the payment came by post without any explanation. All was lost. It seemed that my hard-won literary standing was insecure.

Something must be done. I determined to make myself independent as a writer, and I went to see Hobrecker.

"I say," I announced, after I had boasted of my literary successes, "do you know what? I'm going to start a journal! — Will you join?"

"Hm — Something really ambitious, eh?" inquired Hobrecker.

"That's it. Something on a really big scale!" I assented, and asked: "How about your money? — Have you got it?"

"No, but I shall soon."

I portrayed the whole scheme in the most attractive colours.

"You can have as much money as you want, but of course I must be your chief contributor," replied Hobrecker, already adopting the air of a powerful financier. He produced a manuscript and began to read the opening: "Leo now left the bar. He shivered. He had left Ruth and torn himself away from her flower-like red mouth. Woman is hell, he thought. He grasped the polished revolver in his right-hand pocket and removed the safety catch ——"

I hardly listened; I was turning over the whole scheme in my mind.

"All right," I said, feeling that he had me in a corner, "we can discuss the question of contributions, but will you let me have the money for certain? Can I count on it absolutely?"

"What do you think of the opening?" he asked.

"That wouldn't do for the journal, of course, but you can write

quite good articles. That's what I want — Come, then, tell me definitely, say: 'Yes! — I must know — Just think! You've made a mess of your career, and I shall be the making of you, I shall be of incalculable service to you, if I bring out your work and publish it! ' " I urged him. He beamed.

"You can rely on Willy through thick and thin," he said jovially.

Next pay-day I took my week's wages and ordered five hundred bright yellow, showy letter-heads from a printer, with these words: "Neuland: A journal of the Literature of Self-Revelation — Edited by Oskar Maria Graf — Neuland Publishing Company, Munich."

So there, now I was at one and the same time a poet and my own publisher! Now the road to fame lay open. True, I was not quite sure what "the literature of self-revelation" might be, but it sounded well and imposing.

When I showed the letter-head to Hobrecker he was entranced. He promised then and there to sink his whole fortune "in the undertaking." My spirits rose and I said confidently: "I'll tell you what — You shall be manager." He was as happy as if an order of merit had been conferred on him.

As a matter of fact I was not quite sure what I meant to do about the journal. Nor did I trouble about it in the least. For me the great thing was to publish my own poems. The rest would follow, I assured myself consolingly.

I put an advertisement in the paper: "A Literary Journal for new humanity and ethics seeks young, talented contributors."

Whole bundles of replies arrived. A pleasant shiver ran down my back as I read each pile. It seemed to me that I was much in request, I was a power in the land, almost an epoch. I returned the manuscripts promptly and wrote in the style of old-established editors: "We have read your contribution with interest, but regret that we cannot accept it, as our next two or three issues are already full."

I wrote to my friends in Berlin. Jung answered rudely, Oehring not at all, and my letter to Schorsch came back marked: "Gone away."

I appealed to Thomas Mann. He wrote a very friendly post-card, welcomed the new venture, and wished us every success.

I was in the seventh heaven. Selma grumbled; there was no money left.

"It's developing with giant strides!" I exclaimed vehemently. I took no notice of her objections.

When a man once gets into the grip of a monomania, seconded by an equal measure of ambition and folly, he becomes foolhardy. All at once I gave up going to the post office. I went every evening to the artists' club, "*Simplicissimus*," with Hobrecker. Everybody knew about my plans. "*What is Neuland?*" they asked.

I made the most absurd statements with all solemnity.

"Just literature," I said, for instance. "You'll see." My instinct told me that in that place it would not do to look small. Literary men are born phrase-makers and charlatans. They live on unreality, and each one strives perpetually to overtop his neighbours.

But I was not quick-witted and fluent enough. They regarded me suspiciously and smiled compassionately. I became taciturn all at once. A group of people had gathered round Hobrecker, who gained entire possession of him. I lost my hold on him. Do what I would, he no longer attended to me, but smiled, just like the others when I held forth to him about my plans. I cursed the artist rabble.

"Bourgeois!" I said scornfully.

I was boiling with rage, but held myself in check and would not give vent to it. He, however, withdrew. The rabble had won. One day the landlady told me that Hobrecker had gone away with the whole crowd. At "*Simplicissimus*" I heard that the whole Round Table had gone to Remscheid to obtain possession of the property.

I retreated in vexation. There was an end of the publishing house and journal *Neuland*. Dust collected on the letter-heads. An acquaintance met me in the street and told me that Hobrecker was back.

"Just now the whole of Schwabing is living at his expense! — He's cracked, he does nothing all day but write cheques — Some even for two or three marks — There's a regular queue at the bank

— My, what a fool! — Champagne parties every night — An elementary school teacher kicking over the traces with a vengeance! ” he declared.

“ So much for your friends,” said Selma.

I did not answer. In order to find some outlet for my rage, I returned the manuscripts, which were still arriving, with coarse and vulgar letters to the senders.

I remembered the gentleman at the Red Cross and went to see him at last. His wife received me. She was tall and scraggy, and wore a faded princess dress. There was something distressingly neat and thrifty in her whole appearance, from the plaits twisted round her head à la Gretchen to her worn shoes. From the first moment I took a dislike to her elderly, skinny face, with something Protestant in its expression.

“ Ah. I am very glad to make your acquaintance. My husband has told me so much about you — He will be here in a minute. Come and sit down in our little parlour meanwhile.” Her words bubbled out and she led me into a cosy little room that had just been cleaned. She smiled and begged my pardon as she continued to dust the furniture. We conversed. She was very patriotic and spoke continually of Germany’s invincible greatness. I learned in passing that she came of an old Prussian family and had a brother who was an officer on the western front.

Then her husband arrived. She hurried out into the passage and the pair carried on an eager conversation in whispers. I began to feel ill at ease.

But now they were talking to each other out loud, and at last they came into the room.

“ Ah, that’s right! You’ve really come at last! And what are you doing now?” asked the husband in a somewhat fatherly manner.

“ At the moment I’m out of work, so I thought I should have time to come and see you,” I said with assumed simplicity. He asked all about my circumstances, and then began to discuss literature again. He talked unceasingly, and I agreed with everything he said.

"And the professor that I told you about is at the University here. He is trustee for a scholarship. You must make his acquaintance," he said at one point.

I pricked up my ears. A faint hope crept into my mind.

The wife brought supper. They pressed me to stay. There was porridge with stewed apples, and green salad. I fell to at once.

"Do you like it?" said the wife with pleasure. I nodded cheerfully, and swallowed it all with a tremendous effort. However, I praised her cooking with the wildest enthusiasm. She helped me again and again, and was delighted to find such a healthy, natural fellow.

In the end they gave me quite an affectionate farewell, and I was relieved to get out into the street. At home I found a letter from Schorsch written at the Dutch frontier. His wife, since dead, the artist Maria Uhla, had signed it too. It contained mysterious hints and said finally that they were coming to Munich. I was pleased and then again depressed all at once. Another upset, I thought.

I was in the depths of despair and next day I wrote to the biscuit factory to ask if they would have me back. Yes, they said. I went at once. The former hands were still there. They asked all manner of questions. I answered with impudent lies.

So the old life began again. Every day from early morning till night. Only Sundays free. As a rule I slept the whole day.

When I stopped to think, it seemed that once I had started in this inferno I must always return to it. Late in the evening as I walked home the desire often gripped me to seize a knife blindly and run amuck.

One day a man suddenly addressed me without warning. I looked up in surprise and stared at him. He was the syndicalist whom I had known formerly in the Action Group. He walked the length of a street with me. We talked of the past, and then he began to speak of the war and the Labour movement.

"All the leaders have betrayed and sold us!" he exclaimed bitterly. "There will be no change so long as we wait in our lairs like lazy cowards — The despots won't stop the war — The workers

have got to begin at the beginning. We've got to fight for every ounce of freedom, there's nothing else for it."

I nodded silently.

"It's all the same whether we're slaughtered out at the front or at home! — At least we shall know then what we're being smashed up for," he resumed. His every gesture spoke of sullen weariness. He was the first to tell me of the secret meetings of the Left wing Socialists, and he urged me to come.

Again I nodded. My blood was warmed. I felt some half-conscious resolution taking form within me. This man spoke my own language. Next day — I had only been three days at work — I lay on in bed when Selma came to wake me.

"I've had enough of it!" I bawled, and repulsing her harshly, I turned over in bed. She asked what was the matter. I did not answer. She began to cry. I did not stir.

"It can't go on like this!" I snapped.

"Then do at least go to the doctor and say you're ill," she wailed.

"All right, as you like, ring up the biscuit factory — I'll go to the doctor later," I replied. She went out gloomily.

That afternoon I went to the doctor and got a certificate for sick-leave. Soon after I returned to our studio there came a knock at the door. When I opened it, Schorsch and Maria Uhla stood before me. I was beside myself with delight and excitement.

"My dear fellow! Thank God! Something human at last!" I cried in ecstasy, and I let them in.

They need human material for the war, and it doesn't matter whether it is bent or straight. Schorsch had been medically examined four or five times, and had always been rejected on account of his chronic gout, but at the last examination the doctor had simply said: "Fit for service."

Thereupon the young couple had sold everything and made off with nothing but a full knapsack apiece. They were arrested at the Dutch frontier. It was impossible to return to Berlin, so they came here.

"Like a bird that is stupefied and flies perpetually from one side

of its cage to the other — that's what this war has brought us to," said Maria Uhla. I regarded her timidly. She really did look round the room like a helpless bird.

Selma arrived. We had tea and went on telling our experiences.

We did not separate till late in the night. Soon afterwards Schorsch found a studio in the town, quite near mine. There he worked every day. He lived with his wife in a suburb. We often met and argued.

Next time there was a medical examination in Munich my friend was rejected for six months. We were so much overjoyed that we got as drunk as troopers.

THERE WERE PLAIN INDICATIONS of war weariness by now in the public streets. It is true that the March revolution in Russia had come and gone without serious results. There was a feeling in the air, a belief in people's minds, that what had happened away in the unknown land of the steppes was only a beginning. "They're still carrying on the war, that Kerensky lot," people said, meaning something like this: "A real revolution would make an end of the war." But the Prince Sixtus letters of the Austrian Emperor, and then the peace efforts of the Vienna Government, had just been made public. And people paid more attention to that.

Meanwhile the great mass of the lower classes dragged on their lives in sullen apathy. The daily queues before the food-shops grew longer and longer. Ragged figures stood in these queues with emaciated faces and eyes fierce with hunger. It seemed that each one was watching his neighbour to be sure that, come what might, he did not get more than his share. Apparently what once had been, perhaps, a unique movement of public opinion had now crumbled to nothing. Everybody stood alone, utterly and absolutely alone.

Nobody read the yellow telegraphic announcements from the front any longer. There were sullen murmurs on all sides. The illusion was destroyed. It had ceased to act. The food demonstrations developed into peace meetings. Victory or defeat, heroic deeds, and battles, the Emperor's messages, Hindenburg and forty-two centimeter mortars, — overnight they had lost their importance.

"Oh, yes, let them go on winning, till we're altogether in the mud!" people grumbled, and then the talk started.

"Anyway — If they're winning victories all the time and taking booty? — Why is there never anything but rabbit's liver paste, and turnips and stinking fish?! — That's a nice kind of victory! It's a swindle, and that's all!" argued a man in the street, and everyone agreed. People were specially annoyed about the weak beer, the king, and the Prussians. "The king's the biggest profiteer of the lot!" snarled a woman in the dairy. "He sends all the milk from his estates to North Germany, because he gets more for it — The money-bags count for more than anything else with those great folks — They don't care a damn if we starve."

"It's all his old woman, and nobody else!" said another, referring to the queen. "It's she that wears the breeches! — She runs the whole beastly show, and he, the boob, just says: 'Yes,' and 'Amen,' whatever she does — He's no good for anything —"

You could hear the same kind of thing every day. The most hair-raising rumours passed from mouth to mouth. We were told of whole armies infected with venereal disease, of hidden victims of poison gas and mutilations.

Hunger penetrated even to the ranks of the well-to-do; it was talked of at every bar, it was a spectre, unseen but universally felt. And yet in Munich a relatively large number of people still had things that had long been unknown in northern Germany. Here everybody hoarded as much as possible. There were regular processions of pilgrims to the villages. Anything could be bought in illicit trade, and deserters were no longer uncommon.

I began to read the newspapers again and was much more interested in politics. News came of the first mutinies in the Grand Fleet.

"Now the revolution begins!" I declared romantically to Schorsch. Then I told him about the meetings of the Left-wing Socialists.

"The Germans will never rise in revolt, and there are spies everywhere," said my friend.

"Spies, indeed! If everyone simply lets fly — they haven't enough prisons to lock up all the rebels!" I replied.

That evening I went to the tavern where the syndicalist had told me they held their meetings. On the way I meditated on my life since I had been discharged from the army. Looking back, I found nothing bright or beautiful. I worked myself gradually into a fever of excitement. Bitterness and rage gripped me and merged at last in a single, undefined passion for revenge.

"It's all rubbish about peace and bread and freedom!" was the thought that flashed through my mind. "Just go for them and settle accounts with everybody that ever injured you."

"Down with them all!" I growled, grinding my teeth, and I felt the sweat break out all over me. "Down with the lot!"

I entered the tavern resolutely. Thinking that such meetings had to be held secretly and if possible under some false name, I made cautious inquiries of the landlord, who was sitting at a table by the stove and playing a comfortable game of cards with some of his guests; I was astonished when he said in a loud voice without more ado: "The Independents are in the next room. It's begun already." That cooled my excitement somewhat. These revolutionaries seemed too little secretive and rather harmless.

I hastened to the wooden partition which separated the public bar from the next room, and when I opened the door several heads were raised. They surveyed me without suspicion. Several familiar faces greeted me with a nod. They were syndicalists and people who had belonged to the Action Group, and I saw free-thinkers and a few intellectuals, a fair number of workmen's wives, and one or two soldiers. They all sat there placidly and looked towards a table at the front of the room, behind which a smallish man with flowing, grey hair, moustache, and beard was standing and making a speech. He wore eye-glasses, and his eyes behind them were small and mobile. From time to time he stressed a sentence with a rapid motion of the arm, or stretched out his first finger in the smoke-laden atmosphere like a schoolmaster. His voice was rather monotonous and grating, but he spoke fluently enough. His clothes were untidy, and his whole appearance was that of a retired school-inspector or professor. On reflection I remembered an illustrated history of the

German Revolution of 1848. There were pictures there of similar figures.

"Who is the speaker?" I whispered to the man next to me.

"Eisner," was the answer. I searched my memory, ran over all the revolutionaries and acquaintances of my anarchist days; but no, I must be mistaken, Liebknecht, Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg, Landauer, Mühsam: they were all Left-wingers, but Eisner? What sort of a meeting had I come to?

I was growing suspicious once more.

I listened carefully. Yes—the man's words were revolutionary enough.

"Hear! Hear! Very true!" people exclaimed from time to time. The man raised his voice and his body trembled as he exclaimed: "In 1914 German Social Democracy failed. The proletariat was shamefully, cruelly deceived by its leaders. The carnage began. But now we see the first signs of an awakening! No threats, none of the measures to which they resort so freely to suppress every revolutionary impulse—wartime legislation, imprisonment, shooting, and all the rest of their decrees—none of these will check or destroy this determination in the masses! My lords of the General Staff and the wise judges round the green baize table in the Chancellory are wrong, if they suppose that the mutinies that are breaking out on all sides, the workers' strikes and demonstrations, are solely a peace movement. We are no longer concerned, comrades, with mere opposition—we are concerned, and about that we must all be clear in our minds, with a forward movement carrying us on to the Revolution!"

The speaker mopped his perspiring forehead. On all sides there was resounding applause. I pricked up my ears.

"Expropriation!" shouted a syndicalist suddenly from some corner.

"Sabotage in all the factories!" added another.

"Yes! Yes! That's right!" was the general cry. These strange words provoked me.

"Let the soldiers refuse to obey! Just refuse to carry on!" I

cried rather unsteadily, and earned prompt applause. People looked at me with eyes which inspired confidence. I was stirred and happy.

Eisner had sat down. There was a general buzz of voices, then the bell rang to announce the discussion.

It was principally old workmen who spoke, and a few women. They spoke simply and bluntly. The women became passionate and made bold demands, the men said their say more calmly. The phrases that they had learnt by rote were lost; we scarcely noticed them. Plainly, the speakers were embittered. My blood warmed and I trembled with excitement.

After that I went with Schorsch nearly every week to the Independent Socialists' debates. Everyone in the town knew about them. I saw more and more acquaintances there. I no longer thought of getting work. I waited in expectation of the revolution almost every day, and wrote poems about it. For hours and days together my enthusiasm was at concert pitch.

There were still unpleasant episodes with Selma, but I managed to ignore them more easily.

When I was alone, indeed, I was often doleful enough. It's all very fine, I said to myself, they go on talking and talking about the imminent revolution, but it doesn't begin. It's always just a meeting that comes to an end, the people separate, and everything goes on the same as before.

There came days of depression. I do not know whether other men of my age had the same experience at that time, but my own case was clear: the revolution was something that I could not picture, it was, so to speak, a condition towards which all the world was straining, but hardly anyone had a clear idea what was to happen when it came.

One day I had a heated argument with Schorsch on this subject. I always raved about resorting to force and "letting loose." But he suddenly said with cold common sense: "Yes, but what is your idea of it? Do you think that when the revolution comes you need no longer take a job?"

I was pulled up short and had no reply to make.

"You'll have to work just the same as you do now — The struggle at present is for political power. By the time that has been applied to every detail, we shall probably be on the scrap-heap — But we must always try to stir up unrest," he explained. His words sobered me. I began to think again of looking for work.

Then something unexpected happened.

One Sunday morning we were lying in bed and I had just said crossly to Selma: "Do go on sleeping! Sleeping's the only thing worth doing! Why should we snarl at each other every quarter of an hour! We've got to recognize it: we only feel disgust and irritation when we're awake! — Just go on sleeping! — There's nothing to do but sleep, till the revolution comes!"

"It'll be just the same, then!" Selma reminded me once more. Suddenly there was loud knocking at the studio door, and somebody called: "Mr. Graf!" At first I did not answer. At last, since the knocking went on and on, I slipped into my trousers and opened the door. The gentleman from the Red Cross was there. I was dumbfounded, and forced myself to look gracious.

"I was working late into the night," I said by way of apology. He was cheerful, and came in, saying with an air of benevolent sympathy: "Graf! I have excellent news for you. The professor has read your poems. He likes them very much indeed. You are to receive a scholarship, of which he is trustee, for three months."

He looked at me as if anxious to observe the effect of his words. For the first moment I did not know how to behave; I lost my head and stammered: "Oh — indeed — it's — my God! Thank you, sir! — It's a miracle, it really is —"

"No, no, Graf, you are a great poet," he said encouragingly, and he told me that the professor had literally jumped at my poem "At Twenty." "It's difficult to judge the nature of a man's talent," he resumed, "but the professor says that's drama — he thinks you're a dramatist — you ought to try your hand at drama."

I smiled and smiled. I could not speak. I was to receive a hundred marks a month. I thought of our poverty and of Selma, and I nodded assent to everything that my visitor said. It was bitterly cold in the

studio. I stood there in my shirt-sleeves and did not dare to finish dressing; I heard Selma moving in the next room. I shivered, my visitor's nose ran, but he never stopped talking about Kleist and poetry, about ethics, about all imaginable topics. Every now and then he came close to me and looked into my eyes. Again and again I recalled my wandering thoughts and listened with fresh interest. An hour passed. I was utterly wretched again, aching with hunger, and I realized that Selma was shivering and waiting in the next room.

I stammered repeatedly: "Yes, indeed, that's very true! Very true! — Oh, yes, we see eye to eye there — Yes, indeed, Kleist! — Do you know, I think I really shall write a play — Yes, that's so — Hm, yes — Yes, indeed, Kleist — That could only happen in Germany — yes."

My wits were beginning to go wool-gathering, and at last the fellow went. At last! I burst into the bedroom. Selma stood there shivering. Her clothes were in the studio, and she had not liked to come out. Nor would she stay in bed. She was crying.

"Don't cry! What could I do? Did you hear?" I said in persuasive, comforting tones. "Did you hear, I'm to get a hundred marks a month." She nodded and coughed incessantly.

"I was cold too, but do be glad; everything will go better now; don't cry, my dear ——!" She nodded again and tried to smile. I hastened to light the stove.

"Now we've got our heads above water!" I cried at intervals while we drank our tea.

"You talk as if a hundred marks were the whole world!" she said, damping my enthusiasm. "Good Heavens! It's certainly a great help, but it's nothing startling ——"

"Oh, yes," I said at last, sourly and cynically: "We'd better have gone on sleeping — Oh, yes, sleeping wouldn't excite us."

Next day I went to the bank and cashed the cheque that the man from the Red Cross had given me. That evening I found a note in the letter-box asking me to call at the University two days later; the professor wanted to make my acquaintance after the lecture.

I was wild with triumph and curiosity. I rushed round to Schorsch and told him what had happened.

"Well just write a play!" he said.

"Yes, but I haven't a subject! — That's the trouble — Something has got to happen in a play! — A subject, a plot!" I exclaimed; but in the end I added more carelessly: "But a lot can happen in three months! Something may occur to me."

On the appointed evening I met the Red Cross man punctually outside the professor's lecture-room in the University. Presently the students streamed out, and a gentleman in plain, neat clothes, with a strong resemblance to Nietzsche, came towards us.

"This is Mr. Graf, Professor," said the Red Cross man; I bent my head awkwardly and held out my hand to the professor. I was overcome with shyness and such excitement as a child feels on its confirmation day. But the professor soon dispelled my awkwardness. I liked him as soon as he began to speak. There was something soothing in the sterling frankness of his face. His manner was not in the least what I had expected in a professor. We walked along the street and talked volubly. The professor spoke of my poems with a respect that was new to me. It all sounded utterly unfamiliar.

"You know, Mr. Graf, you have creative powers — Such people are very, very rare, and the war has robbed us of our best talent," he said.

"It's an irrepressible force with you — It rings true, absolutely true — Your poems moved me deeply — 'At Twenty,' my dear Mr. Graf, that's a drama — It really is, exactly as it stands, pure drama — I think yours is a dramatic talent —"

He spoke as though he were deeply interested. I felt embarrassed, but curiously moved. Somebody was praising me for the first time in my whole life. I began to feel faintly self-assured, and confessed to myself: you must have some ability, if a real professor says things like that and comes to your assistance! I felt like a well-behaved schoolboy, who is praised beyond his deserts by his teacher. I hardly dared raise my eyes and longed to express my thanks in well-chosen words. I spoke about all manner of things. No doubt my words

sounded clumsy, and every now and then I grew confused and said: "Thank you so much." Then I expressed the intention of writing a play, and as I spoke it seemed to me something like a school task.

The gentleman from the Red Cross had taken leave. We walked on a little way together.

"Mr. Graf, a man can't become a poet—he is one," said the professor genially, and his eyes met mine. "You are one; I recognized that as soon as I read the first of your poems. You are still so young. You will go far."

I positively glowed, and did not know whether to cry or to shout with joy. But I pulled myself together with an immense effort and said with a slight tremor: "Yes, I hope I shall satisfy you, sir." I was delighted to have said it so nicely.

But the professor smiled and contradicted me eagerly: "No, no, for heaven's sake! No, you mustn't let yourself be biased, Mr. Graf! No, you mustn't do that on any account, or you will be influenced by me——"

"Oh, yes—yes—th-thank you, sir, thank you very much," I stammered in reply, and we shook hands.

Without a care I sauntered along the gloomy streets, dark in the evening haze. I breathed freely. But it did not last long.

"Good Lord, a drama! A drama!" I suddenly murmured in a half-whisper, and again I was perturbed. I promptly bought two papers in the hope of finding a tragedy among the criminal cases. But there was nothing suitable to be found. I was positively vexed that so little happened in the world.

During the following days I hunted high and low for subject-matter for a drama, and was fairly desperate because nothing promising turned up. I was firmly resolved to perform my task properly.

At last I remembered the debates of the Independent Socialists. Ah, I thought, you're sure to get something there! That's very promising, really promising. So I directed my search that way.

Sometimes, when I realized my follies, my awkwardness, and all the confusion of my mind, I was plunged in gloom and dejection. I wanted to be alone and undisturbed, yet every hour, every minute,

the outer world precipitated itself upon me with lacerating force. But now and again I chanced to think of the professor's words, and I repeated them to myself aloud:

"A man can't become a poet—he is one! You are one, Mr. Graf!"

A Crisis in Gloom

I WANTED TO GROW CALM, to thrust aside all thoughts of past and present, and to sit down and write. I wanted to ignore the people round about me, to stand aloof, as it were, from the moving world, to take no further part in anything, and to drink deep of my own life, untouched by outside events.

Yes, I wanted to become a poet.

One man had said I was a poet. If it was already true, then my actions should be gauged only by the measure which I myself applied.

We always interpret ideas in such a way as to favour our own claims. Formerly when I grasped the meaning of the Marxist phrase: "Man is the product of society," I was conscious of something like absolution, at times, indeed, of unrestrained freedom. And now it was precisely the same. I related Stirner's absolutely irrefutable renunciation in a concrete and personal manner to my own undertaking, and interpreted it in my own favour; the passage occurs in his book, *The Ego and His Own*: "What is there in the world that should not be my concern? First and foremost, every good cause, God's cause, the cause of humanity, of truth, of freedom, of mercy, of justice; again, the cause of my own people, of my king, of my fatherland; and lastly the cause of the spirit, and a thousand causes more. Only my own cause shall never be my concern!"

Automatically I got into a sullen habit of repulsing all contact with the outside world. What did I care for our poverty? What was it to me that Selma was expecting a child, and how our future shaped

itself! What did I care for the war and the revolution! What had it all to do with me!

I wrote poems. At times I was completely lost in my own thoughts. I was utterly happy over a rhyme or a phrase.

And yet — it was fatal to leave the studio, and to think of anything. But to refrain was impossible. Yet the moment I stepped out into the street, a thousand impressions stirred me to unrest. There was no help for it, I was caught in their toils.

I had already reached the point when I went out as soon as Selma came home. I attended the Independent Socialist meetings, which had become much more animated. All sorts had joined forces: workers, deserters, pacifist poets and impatient wives, party men and instinctive rebels.

The slowly rising ferment seemed to be in the very air. Any day might usher in the revolution. There were bread-riots before the town hall; women shrieked, and it sounded terrible. The police came and dispersed the crowds. They were assailed with abuse on all sides. A dark cloud hung over the city.

"Revolution! The terror!" shouted a young fellow, and he was arrested. The crowd besieged the constables and wanted to free him by force. Naked sabres flashed out of their scabbards, and a roaring tumult surged in the by-ways and streets.

The revolutionaries worked with feverish energy, and their hopes rose. Nobody was intimidated now by the numerous arrests. Everyone spoke, everyone made the boldest demands, there was insurrection written on every face.

The revolution must come; it *must*!

"A general strike!" shouted the syndicalists.

"Arms and revolution at home!" demanded the Independents and the Spartacists.

"Destroy all machinery! Strike! Refuse to lift a finger; not a finger!" I bawled.

"Anarchist!" was the reproach levelled at me. I did not listen. I repeated my demand.

"You look out, they'll nab you to-morrow!" said a Spartacist as we parted.

"What do I care!" was my answer. "It's bound to begin now! Absolutely certain!"

It was not till I got home to the studio that I grew calmer again. And what I really wanted was to write poetry and be alone!

I often visited the professor, and the Red Cross man as well. The professor taught at the University, led an honest private life, lectured every evening on Byron, Goethe, or Ibsen, came of a good, middle-class Catholic family in Franconia, impressed one as a man of balanced mind, and appeared to have convictions of his own. It was soothing to walk with him. I liked him. He was well over fifty, and he talked to me in a manner common in those circles. There was nothing to which he was violently opposed. He was one of those persons who never need to say that they reject certain ideas; it is clear from the outset. He never forced his beliefs upon me. But whatever he said, I was conscious of his educational influence. He spoke of the war and our country with respect and reverence, on every subject with dignity. Nothing about him was artificial, everything seemed to have grown with his growth.

The Red Cross man sat in his warm room at the head office every day, and in the evenings he attended lectures and prepared for his doctor's degree. He often fetched me to the lectures, for he and the professor had said: "Make use of our national institutions, Mr. Graf." I sat by him in a large lecture hall, amongst the other students, and gazed with intense solemnity at the learned man standing before us at his desk and unfolding his views on one intellectual problem or another. Whether, for instance, Goethe had linked himself to the ancient Germanic pagan beliefs, or whether in his *Faust* he had acknowledged a profounder Christian faith. Very little penetrated to my wandering wits; nevertheless I made a great effort to attend.

Out in the streets the revolution may be breaking out at this very minute, I thought, and I was all impatience. Not a word is spoken here of all that is surging around us and crying out for solution. Everybody here, it seems, has enough to eat and no troubles.

Then I pulled myself together and listened more attentively. When I first entered the University I was timid. I never dared go

into a room without the Red Cross man. But gradually I got over my timidity and attended other lectures.

It was the same everywhere. At most there was the difference between professors with high-pitched or deep voices, with clear or indistinct delivery. One would waste an hour discussing the turn of a phrase in a Middle High German poem, another held forth on the psychological principle in Nietzsche, another again told us about faith and worship in ancient times and in the present, and a fourth lectured on the bases of criminal law in modern civilized states. I gazed at the speaker, and then looked at the students round about me. All their faces seemed alike to me. They sat on the benches, and some had sheets of paper or note-books, and took notes. Every now and then they stamped or shuffled with their feet like naughty school-children, then they went away again with their satchels.

I looked at them more closely and reflected on the careers of people like these. Do they become professors after a number of years, and stand at a desk too, and lecture? And these? They become judges and pronounce sentence upon us. Others, again, become priests, they preach and conduct mass, while yet another group enters the civil service; they begin at the bottom of the ladder, marry virtuously, are helped on in their career, win titles and position, and end by ruling us.

Then the University is an institution where people listen to lectures incessantly for years on end, read a certain number of books, and finally become somebodies.

That is how educated, well-to-do society is established.

The workers toil, the peasants plough and reap—but these people tell us what is true and false, what is legal and illegal, moral and immoral. In a word, these people set the fashion, they command.

They handle “mind” in such a way here, they learn so to transmute the objects of common knowledge beyond recognition, to read so many meanings into every word and every idea, that the plain man is bewildered and begins to feel respect—more, indeed, a certain undefinable fear.

And then? Then he is as clay in the hands of this society.

"Do you know, rather than all these students, who get money from home every month and know nothing, absolutely nothing, of real life, I'd prefer any rag and bone man!" I said to the Red Cross man. Straightway he began to enlighten me.

"Oh, but Mr. Graf!" he cried. "Mr. Graf, you're a rationalist! Your whole mental outlook is mechanistic! You must consider, the University is really an intellectual State! The University is a lofty ethical watch-tower!" He warmed to his argument. "For instance, in Luther's time it was the rallying ground of moral enlightenment for the whole nation! It ought to be the same today, and as a rule it is!"

"Yes, but—it costs a mint of money. A poor man can't go there," I answered bluntly and bitterly, and continued: "If there were no University and none of these fine phrases, the whole world would go on just the same! Moral enlightenment, you say? It's easy for those people in there to be good and cultured and decent and God knows what else, they're not hungry and their prospects are excellent."

The man literally flung himself upon me.

"But Mr. Graf, you must remember that man lives not by bread alone, and we are a nation, a State!" he cried, and he took me home with him.

"State, nation? Those are only words that have stuck in people's minds! They're only the invention of the ruling classes! What we need is simply humanity!" I blustered in retort.

His wife now joined in. He began speaking of Kleist again, of the nation's moral core, of the German soul.

"Soul, indeed," I growled, suddenly scornful and sullen. "People always say you must have soul and character. I know nothing of either."

"But you write poetry, Graf! A poet is of the very essence of the soul!" he cried, driving me into a corner.

"Oh, I only want to write light things," I said, lacking a better retort and partly, too, because I was in a rage.

He smiled at me and his wife shook her head, trying to find excuses for me.

"Then why do you write poetry?" asked the husband.

"Oh, that — that's just practice," I said in the same tone, "I can't do the other yet."

I wanted to get away, but they returned again and again to their correction of me. The wife held a newspaper in her hand; she opened it, read something aloud about a small advance of our troops on the western front, and then exclaimed in horror: "Mercy on us! — How awful, it's the ninth company. Oh, I hope nothing has happened to my brother."

I glanced at the front page, and read hurriedly in black type: "Revolution in Russia! Fall of Kerensky! Petrograd and Moscow in the Hands of the Revolutionaries! Workers' and Peasants' Government in Russia!"

I was electrified. I snatched the paper and stared at the announcement, so that the pair almost shrank back.

"Gosh!" I cried vehemently. "My God! The revolution! Revolution!" I did not give a thought to anything else.

"The revolution has broken out! All over the world! Everything, everything will be changed!" I cried in ecstasy. "The new era has dawned!"

"In Russia!" said the wife, and her face hardened.

"You're a romantic, Graf!" said the man.

I rushed out and away down the stairs, along the streets, and arrived in a bath of perspiration, panting and bounding.

"Revolution! Revolution!" I hummed, roared, sang, whistled, gasped, as I dashed into Schorsch's studio: "Hurrah! It's beginning — And away with the Universities and all this intellectual rot! Revolution!"

Schorsch had heard already. We read the reports feverishly. It was some time before we recovered our equanimity.

"It's bound to begin here soon — perhaps to-day or to-morrow!" I cried jubilantly.

"Listen," said Schorsch, speaking lower now, as though he were

afraid somebody might hear: "I've had a letter from Jung. There's a fellow coming, probably a deserter. He wants us to put him up."

"Indeed?" I said, half curious, half indifferent. "Then I'd better keep in the background, so that the spies mayn't be on the watch; else they'll get hold of us and this fellow too. We must just wait and see."

"Yes, that will be wisest," said my friend. I left him.

All was quiet in the streets. But within me a fire was burning fiercely. I could not forget the faces at the University, how the students sat there unmoved and supercilious, all alike. I pictured to myself all that would happen if revolution suddenly broke out. I thought of the professor, of the Red Cross man and his wife, and all these people who talked perpetually about the fatherland and the war and Hindenburg and the Kaiser and Ludendorff as something from a higher sphere.

So far as I can remember, no one in our family has ever had marked patriotic leanings. The law and patriotism and military enthusiasm were alien to us. Except for my elder brother Max, none of my brothers or sisters had any respect for officialdom or a military life, nor for the civil and military institutions of the State; on the contrary, we regarded the whole thing as more or less ridiculous and absurd. There was nobody whom my mother hated like the police, and she lied instinctively when one of them came to our house and questioned her about our pranks. Even my father, who had done his bit faithfully and honourably in the campaigns of 1870-71, and had brought home a paralysed hand, the Iron Cross, and his swollen feet and decaying teeth, even he, who thoroughly enjoyed telling stories of the war and soldiers' jokes and all his life had a great liking for Bismarck, even he hated nothing so much as a military, patriotic, disciplinarian habit of mind. He carried this inborn dislike for any sort of pomposity in uniform so far as to extend it to people like the schoolmaster, the commander of the veterans, the mayor, and the lawyer, in fact to all who exhaled the odour of officialdom. So far as I remember, he only once attended the parish meeting, and on this occasion abused the mayor with

personal insults of such unsurpassed virulence that that round-bellied, red-haired countryman literally burst into tears. Anyone who filled an official position counted, for my father, as an idle imposter, who was cheating the parish or the State by methods beyond the reach of the law. Nothing disgusted him more than to occupy a post of honour commanding general respect; and yet he not only valued popularity very highly, but sought to win it. He was not in the least morose. Nor was he spiteful, or quarrelsome, or malevolent. What he liked best was gay company, noisy and quite unconstrained, and he could be a fascinating talker. But the moment he came in contact with an official, his geniality vanished. If there were any scheme for playing a trick on such a one, he was ready to join in at once. Indeed, he even invented opportunities himself, and I remember occasions when he gave a whole mark to us boys and to the parish labourer, Schmalzer, or paid for our journeyman's beer, if we had been up to some such mischief. He showed a really thievish joy in our success.

I must confess that I have inherited much of this quality; and when Max began to train me, hatred was added to dislike. An inextinguishable hatred. Nor have any efforts of mine since enabled me to divorce such ideas as fatherland, army, soldiers, war, and patriotism from my memories of my brother. Books and other intellectual influences, my whole mental development, and the war itself, only served to clarify these vague impressions.

I forgot all about writing the play, although the task had gradually fixed itself in my mind as a duty; it had become a monomania and possessed me. I talked it over with the professor on every occasion, but I did not write a line. I was carried away and lost in the rush of events. People said, as they took leave after the debates: "Well, if I'm nowhere to be found tomorrow, you'll know that I've been arrested." When I came home late at night, Selma woke up and wailed.

"My dear girl, the revolution is bound to break out any day now!" I said to comfort her. She felt ill, and writhed in pain. She gasped and was sick. She moaned and coughed.

"Yes, and when your scholarship comes to an end, what then? You've promised to write a play?" she reminded me.

"Oh, yes, I'll write that! I'll knock that off in a trice!" I said in self-defence. I cursed the professor and the whole world. I beat my brains, but not a single idea would come. Already a month and a half had gone by; at the end of the third the money would stop. I groaned.

Impressions, speeches, events, whirled in confusion in my mind; all was disorder.

"It's the fault of that idiotic University; they're all dead nuts on poets and plays. People listen there year in, year out, to nothing but Goethe and Faust and Schiller and Kleist and the drama!" I argued under my breath. Then I flung myself on the bed. I thought of Stirner again. But that was no good!

Suddenly I cried out with theatrical pathos in the darkness: "Nothing can save us but the revolution!"

13

Pegu

THIS IS THE MAN Jung sent," said Schorsch one day, entering my studio with a stranger. I promptly barricaded the outer padded door, bolted the inner door, and drew the curtains. The man was slightly surprised and smiled in amusement.

"Spies! Spies!" Schorsch and I both whispered, and we sat down.

"You're a deserter, I suppose, and want a hiding-place?" I asked the stranger straight out; he was still smiling. He nodded. Then he told me his story.

He had been at the front, and both his arms had been pierced by bits of shrapnel. After his recovery he was considered fit for garrison duty and had served as a clerk in some Berlin barracks. Three or four times he had said to his sergeant-major: "I won't go on with this. I'll hop off."

The sergeant-major had not believed him, and at last he escaped to Munich with forged permission for leave. Jung had given him our addresses. He had slept at another acquaintance's rooms the night before, where, however, he could not stay another night.

"Well, then, we must just look for a room or a studio," I said, after we had discussed the problem at length, and I looked again at the stranger. "What is your name?"

"Pegu," he said, and smiled ambiguously.

"Oh, yes, that isn't his real name — his name is Glaser, but that's not it either — It doesn't matter," Schorsch broke in, and we agreed on "Pegu." At last we rose. Pegu put on my hat, I put on Schorsch's, and Schorsch Pegu's. Then we quitted the house separately. Each

went in a different direction. We agreed never to meet except in the street.

Without telling Selma about it, I began to hunt for a room or a studio in the days that followed. I no longer attended the Independent Socialists' debates, in order to avoid attracting the attention of the police.

I met Pegu every day, and after a time we became friends.

"It's difficult to find anything," I said rather hopelessly somewhere about the sixth day, and we went gloomily on our way. Then an unexpected stroke of luck came to our assistance. I saw one of my pre-war Munich acquaintances in the distance, a man whom I knew to be in the asylum at Eglfing.

"You go on," I said hastily to Pegu, and I ran after the man.

For some eighteen months this man, Friedrich Wunder by name, had been my bitterest enemy. When I was at Haar he had been at Eglfing as a civilian mental case, and he was allowed to go to Munich once a week. Once I gave him money to buy cigarettes. He did not bring them back, spent the money, and never showed his face again. When at last I got hold of him, I gave him a good box on the ear. After that, it was impossible to approach him.

For Friedrich Wunder was not only deeply injured, he was altogether a feather-headed creature with an artistic temperament, capable of being upset by any simple, reasonable question. He went about — or rather, he wandered along — like a figure from a long past Bohemian epoch. As a rule he talked to himself under his breath, and when he actually met anyone he knew, he recited poems of George and Rilke without a break, talked about Michelangelo and the pre-Raphaelites, and in moments of exaltation believed himself to be a new Savonarola. A deep-rooted hatred of the bourgeois, and a morbid suspicion of everybody were written in his face. His clothes were wrinkled, and always much too large for his small, wizened, dilapidated figure. A worn dress-coat, probably belonging originally to somebody with a well-rounded corporation, hung pathetically about him, his trousers were too long and made one think of an accordion; his shoes were worn and much too large, the bow

of his tie usually settled at the back of his neck over a dirty black paper collar, and finally his hat, which was far too small, seemed stuck to his ragged, scurfy hair.

At the outbreak of war he was found in the street early one morning, half frozen and starved, and was taken to a sanatorium. He was a semi-skilled photographer by trade, and at that time he was possessed by the desire to make stencilled carpets, and he spent every penny on buying candles. It was said that he had a whole store of hoarded wax candles, which he guarded as precious treasures.

On this occasion, too, he had a packet under his arm and was running along as swift as a weasel.

"I say! Wunder!" I cried cheerily, when at last I was within a few steps of him, and I came close up to him.

"Aha-a, you spiteful old skinflint!" he gurgled, and glowered at me like a stuck calf. His protruding, watery eyes leered at me suspiciously. He stopped short.

"I say, Wunder, I was a fool that time to hit you; come, are we friends again?" I went on with unperturbed amiability, and then I asked: "Are you still at Eglfing?"

"A-a-ha-ha-ha! Y-y-yes, at Eglfing!" he laughed brutishly and nodded.

"Just listen; can I register you with the police in Munich?" I asked quickly, and took no notice of his laughter. His expression changed instantly to one of offended dignity. He thought I was mocking him. I gave him a cigarette. He was always surprisingly responsive to kindness, and now he became more accessible.

"You see you do stencil work, and later on you'll want to get on in your trade. I know a man who might let you use his studio some day; do you see the point? You needn't be suspicious. It's quite true. I will register the studio in your name, if you like; what do you say?" Thus innocently I explained the situation to him.

But he did not believe a word of it. He burst into loud laughter and grinned like a clown.

"Ha-ha-ha-aha-haha, you jeering dog, ha-ha-haha-ha!" he

roared. "Oh, of course, Fred Wunder is to play the clown again, ha-ha-ha, you dog . . .!"

I was at my wit's end; I spoke still more seriously and did my utmost to appear genial. I put in casual questions about his age, and got the date of his birth out of him.

"Freddy, oh Freddy!" I exclaimed when my efforts had succeeded, suddenly changing my tone, and clapping him on the back with brutal violence, so that he started. "Oh Freddy, there's no one like you! — You're magnificent! — You're much greater than Savanarola! — You're a living backhouse with a poem by Rilke stuck in the middle! — Freddy, I love you!"

This speech had its intended effect; he hated me again more bitterly than ever. I left him standing there and ran off.

I had discovered a studio to let a few days earlier in a little side street. I went there now and took it, saying that I was acting for a friend, and filled in the registration form as follows: "Friedrich Wunder, photographer, Catholic, born December 24th, 1891 in Munich, Bavarian subject."

"My friend will be coming in a day or two," I said to the landlady, and I went to find Pegu.

"Your name is Fred Wunder, you're a photographer, a Bavarian, born on December 24th, '91, in Munich — Come along now, we've found a room," I said, and he followed irresolutely, only half convinced.

That same afternoon we bought some sticks of furniture second hand, and in the evening we arranged Pegu's studio.

"That's all right — Only remember to keep quiet, grease the landlady's palm well with tips, and don't talk much — Don't do anything to attract notice," I counselled him, and left.

Next day I went to Schorsch in high spirits and told him what I had done.

"I do hope it will be all right," said Maria Uhla.

Schorsch roared with laughter at my dealings with Wunder. He, too, had known him in the old days.

After that I met Pegu every day. He was a shy creature, even

childish at times, but an accurate thinker. I read poems to him. Occasionally he would criticize them with remarkable perspicuity. We argued constantly, and gradually he threw off his depression. As time went on we even ventured into public houses. There really seemed to be no danger. In the early evening my comrade crept back into his hiding-place, for at night one was liable to be held up. One stupid mischance, and all would be lost.

At this time a new impetus came to the revolutionaries, and greater hopes to the war-weary masses. The Russian wireless message "To all mankind," and Wilson's Fourteen Points were echoing throughout the world.

The Russians declared for a general peace without annexation and for the self-determination of the peoples, and the American President proclaimed the League of Nations as a new universal panacea.

"Peace! Peace!" was the daily hope. "Peace! Peace!" the cry swelled to an impatient clamour. German negotiators went to Brest-Litovsk.

There the struggle swayed obstinately, now this way, now that. Germany made claims on the Border States. General Hoffman re-interpreted "without annexation" as meaning "without forcible annexation." The delegates came home and fetched new instructions. The papers talked of "a broad strip of territory as a barrier against Bolshevism," and even the Majority Socialists got excited about it.

The revolutionaries carried on unwearying propaganda. The negotiators met again at Brest-Litovsk, and now for the first time Leon Trotsky's revolutionary speeches rang across the eastern frontier into Germany.

At Eisner's meeting I had heard of preparations for a strike. There was to be a general strike throughout the Empire in January. I told Pegu.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed. "You needn't go to Eisner and his lot. We've other work to do."

He showed me a manuscript. It was Prince Lichnowsky's memorandum which was being circulated at that time as a secret typed

document amongst none but the initiated of the peace movement. He gave me money and I hired a typewriter. In the following days he dictated to me "Lichnowsky's Mission to London."

"This has simply got to be printed and distributed among the masses before the strike. We must find a printer," he said.

"That will bring them on your tracks; you'll see," I warned him, but he was not to be moved.

"The mass of the people must know how they have been deceived," he replied.

"Rubbish! Deceived? That's quite beside the point. There's deceit and lying on all sides. This pamphlet is too long for propaganda purposes. Nobody will read it—

"— We must work along quite different lines," I declared. "Now that things are moving we must spread the wildest rumours — The masses must be roused, so much roused that at last the dullest Philistine is utterly bewildered — Then we shall get them to be absolutely passive — That's the one thing that matters! — Not revolt against the war, but simply a refusal to support it, that's what's wanted —"

"Tolstoi doesn't hold good in these times," my comrade interposed.

"Tolstoi! He holds good to all eternity! — But it's true what I said: if nobody will carry on, that's all," I maintained. He merely shook his head again and again, and smiled a strange smile.

My friend was no idle babbler. He refused to be turned from his course. We soon discovered that when once he had got an idea in his head he was resolute and resourceful in his efforts to carry it through. There was only one perpetual check on his determination. Everything, great and small, was a problem to him. He was capable of throwing himself blindly into an undertaking, in spite of ten thousand obstacles. Whatever task came his way he wanted to clear it up and settle it; he seized upon it with all the force of his penetrating mind, and was caught again and again in the complicated problems which he raised every hour, or rather every minute.

He called me a nihilist, and considered that such people had no

part in the actual revolution; they were only useful for a time as propagandists.

"We must hurry up! The pamphlet must be got out! It'll soon break out!" he said continually while he dictated, urging me on, and at last the manuscript was finished.

That same evening, in spite of Pegu's warning, I went to the Independent Socialists' debate. Ernst Toller, who had fled from Heidelberg, was making a fiery speech against the war. Fervent, ecstatic, with fierce gesticulations and face convulsed with passion, he poured out his feelings. He shivered like a man in fever and foamed at the mouth.

He seemed to me all blackness. Deep, dark eyes, thick, black hair, beautiful eyebrows and a sallow complexion.

"You mothers!" he began, and repeated the words again and again, portraying the horrors of war with the fiery rhetoric of a poet. "You brothers and sisters!"

Everybody was swept off their feet. A few women wept or became frenzied.

"Down with the war! To the gallows with Ludendorff!" they all chimed in. When the meeting broke up we were all eager to be up and doing.

"Let everyone do all that is in his power!" had been Eisner's counsel.

Toller accompanied me for a short distance on the car. His speech was on wings; he poured out his words.

"Do you write too?" he asked me.

"Oh, yes, all sorts of things," I answered, and he told me of a play that was already in the press. He had a fair-haired little friend with him, who gazed up at him continually in dumb admiration. I shook hands with both and alighted.

Next day I went to the printer with whom I had formerly arranged to print *Neuland*.

I discussed the matter with him and gave him the manuscript. He glanced hastily at the title and then looked at me.

"How many copies do you want?" he asked.

I did not answer at once. The printer began to look suspicious. I was secretly vexed at my awkwardness.

"Oh, two or three thousand, I expect," I said after a pause.

"Very well; as I said, sir, I can't tell you at once — I must make an estimate," said he, and looked at the pamphlet again.

"And it's really an educational pamphlet?" he asked.

"Yes — a report," was my reply.

"Very well; the day after tomorrow, then," said the printer at last, and rose. I left him.

"Do you know — I believe, I believe — I didn't like that man at all," I said uneasily to Pegu later on. He did not speak, but merely smiled out of the corner of his mouth for a moment.

"Oh, well, you know — after all, he won't read it," I said to reassure my comrade and myself. We parted, speaking hardly a syllable.

Two days later Pegu came with the money for the printer's bill. He was cheerful and in the best of spirits. We set out. It was a sunny day, and the bright weather raised our spirits. By chance we met Schorsch at a street corner and made him come with us.

We left Schorsch waiting outside the printer's. We passed rapidly through two buildings and the intervening courtyards into the rear building, and entered the office. The printer was sitting there, this time almost as if he were expecting us; his face was noticeably white, and he held the manuscript in his hand which trembled a little. When we came in he rose at once and said in a dull voice: "Mr. Gra-af — here — here is ——"

He broke off. A sudden thought flashed into my mind. At the same moment a sturdily built man entered behind us, and another, a smaller man came with like suddenness from the composing room. The two exclaimed together: "Gentlemen, what are your names? I am Constable ——"

The master printer gazed into space and shook. We looked agitated. For a moment my heart stood still. It was not till I noticed the printer's malicious smile that I turned swiftly and looked at Pegu.

"What is your name?" repeated the sturdy constable more imperiously, and looked me up and down.

"Graf."

"And yours?" he asked Pegu.

"Graf." In case of need I had given him my certificate of discharge.

"Are you brothers, then?" asked the constable incredulously.

"No — my name is Oskar Maria Graf, and his Graf-Berg," I answered promptly, and immediately regretted my stupidity. Pegu continued to stand like a statue.

"Very well, we shall soon see — You must come with me," said the constable, conscious that we were in his power, and raising his hand he pointed a warning finger at us: "Let me tell you, you'd better not run away, or we shall have to shoot ——"

He then took possession of the manuscript, and we were made to walk singly, each with a constable beside him.

"Good-bye," said the sturdy man to the printer.

"Good-bye," he replied.

"Good-bye," I cried with assumed carelessness. No reply. Indeed, we were already outside.

Out in the street we ran into Schorsch, who had been arrested too. We exchanged glances, and on we walked through streets bright with the January sunshine. People stared at us open-mouthed. We three all fixed our eyes on the ground or gazed straight ahead, looking neither to left nor right; and each one of us was following his own thoughts. Each one was gripped at the arm by a constable. Suddenly in Lenbach Square Pegu knocked violently against his man, gave a half-choked growl, and made off like a madman. For a moment we all stood still in astonishment, my constable gripped me more firmly, and there were cries on all sides of: "Stop him! Stop him!" The little constable flew for all he was worth across the square. The people ran. We plodded on.

"Hm. They'll soon get the fellow," growled the sturdy man beside me. I looked wholly unconcerned, but the blood within me surged and pulsed. Away! Away! Trample everything underfoot,

kill every living soul, only away, away! The thought grew more and more overpowering as we approached the police station. My heart thumped wildly, and I was possessed by the one desire. But suddenly — it fairly wrenched my head round — Pegu reappeared, beside the little constable. He had lost his hat, beads of perspiration shone on his high forehead, he was smiling faintly, and panting like an overdriven horse, and he gazed at me with strangely troubled eyes. We could only wait.

“No luck!” Pegu gasped, and the words were addressed to me.

“Shut up! Hold your tongue!” growled the little constable, and he pushed my comrade in front of us. He had fastened the nippers on Pegu’s arm, and turned it round from time to time. I saw plainly that it drew blood and the flesh was torn.

At last we entered the police station. We went up stone steps, through long, dark passages, till we reached a room with files of documents. It was very hot. The sturdy constable sat down and took the record to note our depositions, while the little man and a few more surrounded us, searched us, and took everything that was in our pockets. The sturdy man examined my papers. I threw a swift, meaning glance at Pegu. He did not seem to understand and only gazed before him with troubled eyes. Now and again he attempted a faint smile. I turned to Schorsch. But he merely looked uneasy.

“Come, now, you won’t disclaim for long. What is your name?” asked the man, taking Pegu’s deposition. Pegu hesitated. Their whole interest seemed centred in him.

“Mr. Gla-aser, or — You’re from Berlin, aren’t you?”

Pegu maintained his silence.

The recorder turned to the little constable, who was bending over a paper now and said with studied distinctness: “His name is Gutfeld, he is a merchant and comes from Berlin.”

“Did you know that?” the recorder asked me direct.

“I — ?” I stammered; I was angry at my own confusion and pulled myself together. “I — ? He came to me and asked if I knew of a room he could have —”

"You have been asked whether you knew his name," the policeman rapped out at me. I had gained time.

"I don't ask a man's name — I think his name was Glaser," I replied.

"Indeed. Well, it is Paul Gutfeld, so now you know," said the recorder.

"Really, Gutfeld? Well, I never troubled about that — I only heard of him as Glaser," I retorted with guileless impudence, and I looked boldly at my interlocutor and then sought Pegu's eyes.

"Don't look round at one another when you are spoken to!" the recorder snapped fiercely, and proceeded: "Well, so Mr. Glaser came to you? When was that?" He made a note.

"I don't remember exactly. About two months ago," was my reply.

"And you did not ask where he came from and what his business was? That's nice, very nice! Have you known Glaser long?" asked the man bluntly.

"I made his acquaintance when he came to see me — But then we never do that kind of thing, never bother about a man's business or who he is — When I go to Berlin I meet all kinds of people and spend the night with somebody or other — and he doesn't bother to ask my business," I said with assurance.

"We?" demanded my interlocutor. "Whom do you mean by 'we'? Is it a society or club, or what do you mean?"

I could not help smiling faintly as I shook my head.

"Oh, no, that's nothing. I mean writers or artists. If someone turns up and I have no room, I just look round and find something for him. It's no concern of mine what he does," I answered a little ironically.

"Indeed; so Mr. Glaser came to you and said he wanted a room? Was he alone?" the examination proceeded. Schorsch roused himself.

"Glaser came to me first and I went with him to Graf," he said, speaking instead of me. His intervention was allowed. The police officer made a note.

"Then this gentleman came with him to your rooms?" he asked me once more.

"Yes," I nodded.

"Did he spend the night with you?"

"No. I am married, you see, so it wouldn't do," I said.

"Ah — And did you find a room?"

"Yes," I answered, and then in a flash it occurred to me that desperate complications must follow. I racked my brains in an intense effort to decide what story to tell.

"And where?" asked the police officer. After a few moments of hard thinking I spoke. It makes no difference, they know far more than we supposed, I reflected. I gave the address of Pegu's hiding-place. The man at the table wrote it down and said: "Ah, 5 Schnorr Street, the garden house," and the small policeman searched me all over once more.

"Have you finished with him?" asked the little man, and the recorder nodded. They led me away. We went along a dark passage, and stopped before a japanned tin-plated door. The constable said to the warder who opened it: "Solitary confinement for him." We went down several stairs, then some ten steps along another bare, poorly-lit passage; the warder unbolted a second tin-plated door, and the constable pushed me into the cell. I heard the pair outside exchange a few words more. Their footsteps clattered on the stone flags, I heard doors being unbolted again, and then all was still.

For the moment I only thought of Pegu and Schorsch. Without noticing my surroundings I leaned against the cold, polished door and pictured to myself all that my two comrades might say. How asinine, how very asinine! We ought to have discussed this possibility more fully. The devil take it!

I had fleeting thoughts of how Selma would come home, would find the note, and wait. She would be annoyed and then anxious; she would not be able to sleep and would racket round. Oh Lord! and tomorrow I ought to have pawn tickets renewed, or everything would be forfeited —

I became dejected. I happened to recall the illustrated weekly

paper that we took at home when I was a boy. "Take Me Along," it was called, and each number had a brightly coloured picture on the title-page, illustrating the latest news. Once there was a picture of Father Gapon's procession in the Russian revolution of 1905, he leading the way, holding a cross and followed by unnumbered masses, all inspired by an unshakable resolution —

It was queer: suddenly it seemed as if I heard a distant tumult, penetrating the thick walls and barred windows, confused sounds and the beat of a thousand steps, a vast crowd surging in the streets. I strained my ears. Now, perhaps, there is a clash with the police, I thought, now there is a storm of paving-stones, now the struggle is beginning; oh, there'll be no stopping them, it will be victory, victory!

I was in a fever. My blood surged. Then I again heard the door being unbolted, and there was the buzz of voices and footsteps. I turned involuntarily and pressed my eye to the peep-hole in the door. But there was nothing to be seen. Apparently the hole was covered on the outside. I could only listen.

"Solitary confinement," said the constable's voice again. A door was bolted, there were footsteps and a few words.

I was relieved. I felt it in the air that one of my friends had been put in a solitary cell in the same corridor. According to my calculations the cell must be nearly opposite mine. We could not communicate by taps. Some other means must be devised. I racked my brains. Ah! I had an idea. Once I had been to *Carmen* with Pegu — in fact the only time in my life that I had been to the opera. And since then we had used the melody "Up to battle!" as our signal.

I began to whistle low and timidly, paused, began again rather louder. And hark! From a cell nearly opposite came the tune: "Up to battle!"

"Up to battle!" I whistled with more animation. "Up to battle!" came the answer more cheerfully, and Pegu's voice called, as it seemed, from a deep cave: "Oskar?!"

"Pegu, is it you?!" I cried lustily.

"Yes, yo-ho!" came the response.

"Yo-ho! where are you?" I asked.

"Cell 5, in your corridor!"

"And I'm in number 2, yo-ho; the blow is struck!" I shouted in uncontrolled excitement. "Where is Schorsch?"

"He must be upstairs," answered Pegu in the same tone, and he added: "I say, Oskar! — They know all about it."

"Shut up!" I cried hastily. "Don't say anything about it!"

He was silent. Only once in so often we whistled softly to each other. I walked briskly up and down my cell, and now at last I examined it more carefully. It was fairly lofty and the walls were painted in grey-green oil colour. In the middle of the ceiling an electric light was fixed. By the wall on the right stood a collapsible wooden bench on which a white blanket was spread. At the head of this couch was the water-closet. High up above the bed was a tiny strip of window with heavy iron bars, half-open inwards. Standing on the bench I could just reach it with my hands, but the wall was slippery and the moulding crooked; there was no hold, and the bars were fixed outside. I climbed on to the seat of the closet, which was a little higher, and managed to see a strip of dark night sky. The air came damp and cold through the opening, and the steam heating brought out drops of moisture on the walls. It was not really worth while to walk to and fro, for there was only room for six steps along the cell and four across.

For a time I whistled out of the window, hoping for a sign of life from Schorsch, but in vain. I deferred my hopes to the morrow, climbed down from the bench and turned my attention to my surroundings again. I had seen everything. It generally happens when we come into new and strange surroundings — however bare and insignificant — that we search out what is most interesting and devote our time to it. Here — and my situation was exceedingly boring and of uncertain duration — the most interesting object was decidedly the water-closet. First I sat on the lid. That was quite pleasant. Then I got up, because I could not see the valve, and examined its working. I opened the lid and shut it again. Oho, yes, indeed. There was a gurgling and the water began to flow. That was lovely. It

provided me with hours of entertainment. I raised the lid and banged it down again. It worked admirably. I raised it again, faster and faster, in the end like the very devil. Only it was tiresome that I could not see the water running.

Just as I was shutting down the lid I heard the unexpected creak of keys in the lock, and gave a start. Two warders appeared. One had a basket full of thin slices of black bread, the other carried a white enamel coffee-pot.

"Supper!" growled the man with the coffee, took out a bowl from behind the closet and filled it. The other, a dirty, stout giant, put a slice of bread on the bench. The pair locked the door again without a word. I heard the same proceedings in all the cells.

I sat down on the bench, ate the bread, took a gulp of the bitter coffee now and again, and tried to collect my thoughts.

I could foresee pretty well what was before me: a series of interrogations, the trial, the sentence, and to be cut off from life for some time. For the moment I was penned in this hole and could only wait. There was nothing to be done, no occupation, I could not even smoke; the drama, the professor, the pawn tickets, Selma, the debates, and the coming revolution — they were all obliterated at one stroke, all torn from me, so to speak. And God alone knew for how long!

I pottered about, only for the sake of some occupation. And then I became a little more cheerful. Hm, I thought, you can describe all this some day, perhaps it will make a fine story. Yes, indeed, very fine! As a matter of fact there's nothing that isn't a paying proposition for a literary man. I began vaguely to sketch single scenes, and grew thoroughly contented with my situation. Suddenly the light was switched off. I stood still in vexation and grumbled under my breath. Then I felt my way cautiously along the bench, and in so doing upset the half-filled bowl of coffee. It fell over with a clatter and the liquid ran over my feet. I was furious and whistled loud. Pegu answered promptly.

"Oskar?" he queried.

"Yes! Pegu! — It makes me sick!"

"Thumbs up! It doesn't matter!" was his comforting retort.

"Oh, well, good-night!" I called and he returned the greeting.

I crept on to the bench, took off my jacket, folded it into a pillow, rolled myself in the blanket, and tried to sleep. The hours dragged on. I was cold. Every now and then my eyes closed, then again I lay awake for a long stretch. When the electric light was switched on again and I awoke, I ached in every limb. There was coffee and bread again. Shortly afterwards the guard fetched me to be cross-examined.

Cross-Examination

I WAS TAKEN to the same room to which we had first been brought at the police station, and again the sturdy police officer interrogated me. This time he was more genial, and even let me sit on a chair. I had to give particulars about myself again.

"Mr. Graf," he began directly, and put ironical emphasis on the word 'Mr.' "I have looked through your pocket-book. I see that your circumstances are seriously embarrassed. Most of your things are in pawn, eh?"

"Yes," I said, "I wanted to speak to you about the pawn tickets — Some of the things will be forfeited, unless the tickets are renewed — Couldn't a policeman take me to the pawnshop, so that I can put things straight?"

The officer said no, that would be seen to. Then he turned and looked straight at me: "You were a baker formerly? — Why, you are quite a decent fellow! — You have got into a nice mess through this Gutfeld." He tried the method of guileless candour. I gazed at his ruddy, healthy, stupid face, and as he seemed to assume that I was repenting of the whole adventure, his hopes rose. He continued in still more sympathetic tones: "You are married, your wife is a book-keeper and is expecting a child?" I nodded. He kept his eyes fixed on me.

"You have been at Eisner's meetings, Mr. Graf?" he asked innocently. I admitted it. He nodded.

"And once you spoke in the discussion and said the soldiers ought to clear out of their barracks?" he asked. I hesitated and considered rapidly what to say.

"Officer," I said in my most confiding tones, "I'm desperately hot; might I ask for some water?" I looked at him meekly. The man rose in the kindest manner and poured me out water from a decanter: "There, drink it." I emptied the glass at a single draught and panted, so that they could not help feeling quite sorry for me and my thirst.

"Thank you so much — thank you very much, officer," I said fervently, and when he returned to the debates and the Eisner meetings I said with apparent readiness: "Did I speak? — As far as I remember, I never spoke, officer — No, no, I didn't — anyway, I'm no speaker, but it may be that I interrupted — That may be —"

"You're not a member of the Independent Socialist Party?" inquired the sturdy man.

"No — I don't belong to any societies, officer — I have never had to do with societies," I replied, speaking partly in the local dialect current in the taverns.

"Do you think *those* people would manage things better?" he wanted to know.

"Oh, good heavens, better? — I really don't know — It's a matter of taste, officer — I don't know whether you have ever slaved for months together in factories — You know, a fellow gets fed up," I continued, voluble now in my rôle of simple peasant, and no one interrupted me. "I should like to come across anybody who has no fault to find with the present times. A fellow gets aggravated and, of course, he grumbles. The policeman who heard me speak somewhere or other may have thought himself: they're not altogether wrong. Only of course he reckoned that he got his salary and a good position, and kept quiet in consequence. Don't you think so, officer?" But that was going too far for the guardians of law and order. The man's face flushed redder than ever.

"Mr. Graf!" he reprimanded me. "Don't let us have so much irrelevant talk! And did not this Gutfeld give you money?"

I refused to be put out of countenance and said with assurance: "Good Lord! Lots of people have lent me money."

"Lent? — But he gave you money for a typewriter — You can't possibly repay it — I suppose he asked you to do work in return or give some service; or how was it?" inquired the officer.

It was a good thing that his questions were so long; for it was easy to evade them and take time for reflection. Besides, I was in no hurry to return to my cell.

"Artists aren't like that, officer," I resumed. "When one has anything he gives to another, and then the other is in funds and he gives — It's not our way to ask payment for every trifle — Of course I typed for him after he had ——"

"Make a long story short, then!" The policeman jerked round in annoyance and looked at me suspiciously.

"So Gutfeld dictated a manuscript to you — Did you know where it came from?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," I replied innocently. The sturdy man raised his head at once; he was curious, indeed he was amazed at my frankness.

"It was to be issued as a pamphlet for the strike!" Thus he tried to convict me. I looked astonished.

"The strike? — Whatever strike is that? — Oh, no, I can hardly believe that — I regarded the pamphlet as a historical study," I replied collectedly, and continued: "The workers would never read that kind of thing! It's much too long and learned for them."

"Then you didn't know exactly what the manuscript was for?"

"Not a bit — I really thought it was a historical study," I said, and he noted it down.

"You introduced Gutfeld to the printer. Why did you want two or three thousand copies straight away?" asked my interlocutor.

"Oh, well, that's the smallest possible edition and the more one prints the cheaper it comes," I answered. Mr. Fuchs, the officer, made a note. I looked out of the window. Outside it was grey, wintry weather. Soon it began to snow.

"Did you know that Gutfeld was a deserter?" asked Fuchs abruptly.

I shook my head and said no.

"Then why did you register him under a false name?" he continued his searching inquiry.

"As a matter of fact I took the studio for my friend, Fred Wunder, officer," I said with rather less assurance, and I collected all my wits, "Glaser was only able to use it because Wunder is still in an asylum — When he comes out, he will take it over. He does stencil work —"

Fuchs scented trickery and surveyed me critically. It was clear that he was growing dissatisfied.

"You won't put that across me," he said more sharply. "You looked for a studio for Gutfeld and took it for him under a feigned name — That alone is a punishable offence — You needn't tell me that anyone would be so obliging to a complete stranger —"

I planted myself more firmly before him and said with decision: "I am a Catholic, officer! — The first principle of the Christian faith is to help our neighbour — If a man comes to me and asks me for something, I can't wait to make inquiries — If I can, I help him, and that's all there is to it —"

Fuchs bent forward a little.

"Indeed!" he cried, suddenly exultant, and went on firmly: "You are not so stupid as not to have known that Eisner, for instance, and these accomplices of his want revolution — You once said when you were with your friend that people should refuse to obey the State! — But Eisner and the Independent Socialists have always said there must be a strike to stop the war and change the present political order — They even proclaimed the principle that every deserter must be helped!" He was near to blustering. I looked at him fixedly and unafraid. His face was ruddy and healthy. He was not suffering want; you could see that from his well-rounded belly, and the way he towered above me and enjoyed his power. That kind of thing in a man has always roused me.

For a few moments I hesitated whether simply to shout the whole truth at him, but I soon pulled myself together.

"Oh, yes, they wanted it all right — *Wanted!*" said a man sitting

beside Fuchs, and his unshaven face was distorted with malicious laughter.

"Wanted!" I thought, and then I said undauntedly: "Officer, you and I cannot help that."

The words slipped out so ironically that Fuchs flushed a deep red. He scanned me as one sunk to the lowest depths, but I was unmoved. I was almost inclined to laugh at his pompous conceit. I was thinking of something entirely different, something that I never forgot and that always recurred to my mind on occasions like this.

It was of my mother that I was thinking. Once when I was a little boy an aristocrat and a smartly dressed lady came into the shop, and both complained indignantly because the little bag in which their rolls were delivered every day was not perfectly clean. I was standing beside my mother. The two grantees talked on and on, as if they had suffered the most scandalous injustice. My mother made no reply, but when they were gone she stroked my bullet head wearily and said: "Good gracious, what fine folks they make themselves out! And when they're stripped they're naked just like us, and when they're dead, they're no more than a heap of muck!"

I looked at Fuchs and made a barely perceptible grimace. He read all that he had written down in a stern voice and made me sign it. Then I went back to my cell with the guard.

I walked to and fro in it with a strange sense of relief, and suddenly I broke into a bold whistle. Pegu promptly followed suit.

"They have cross-examined me!" I said in answer to his question. He wanted to know more.

"Keep cool — Pegu? — Keep cool! — What can they do, after all! — Keep cool! — If we are separated, always let me have news of you!" I called to him, feeling more at peace. "Yes, Oskar, yes!" was his affectionate answer.

Shortly afterwards I heard them fetch him. I waited and waited for his return, but he never came. After some hours I whistled again. There was no answer. He must have been removed.

All was silent, and this silence paralysed me.

I climbed on to the closet seat again and whistled for Schorsch; I

called his name in a loud voice. After a good hour of vain effort I jumped down again. It was intolerably dull. All my limbs were tingling and I was wretchedly ill at ease. From time to time some tattered shred of an idea flashed through my mind, but it was gone in a moment and all was blank once more.

Suddenly I dashed at the closet, tore open the lid, banged it down again with all my might, and went on, faster and faster, more and more violently. Nothing mattered. I only heard the water rushing.

All at once the warder began to bawl outside and shout abuse and threats. I stared stupidly at the hole in the door and stood still. For some time the warder walked to and fro outside angrily grumbling. I dropped on to the bench and thought of nothing at all. There was nothing to do but wait, and wait in uncertainty.

Towards evening on the second day the warder to my surprise fetched me again to Fuchs, who gave me a tremendous talking to, intermingled with threats and warnings. I simply said: "Yes" from time to time, and then they let me go.

The air seemed wonderfully fresh as I left the police station. It was cold, but I never thought of that. The frozen snow crackled under my feet, and the lamps shone into the clear darkness.

I craved for a cigarette. I felt in my pocket for money. It was all right, they had returned everything: my money, my keys, and my pocket-book. I entered a shop. "Yes, ten for three," I said and lit a cigarette. I reeled out of the shop like a sleep-walker and revelled in the flavour of the smoke. Gradually I remembered: Oh, yes, you live in Schraudolph Street; yes, and Selma is at home; and you can do whatever you like. My will and my thoughts were my own once more. I realized my surroundings bit by bit: the trams, the people, the houses, the lights.

When I reached the studio I smiled at Selma.

"God be praised," she said, and added: "Now you see what comes of always sacrificing yourself for others."

I did not take up the dispute, but let her talk. I was not even hungry. I drank my tea and munched my bread and jam indifferently.

Next day I looked up Schorsch.

"Where can Pegu be?" we asked in one breath, and both shrugged our shoulders.

"I say, the great strike has collapsed — Everybody has been arrested: Eisner, Kämpfer, the two Landauers, all of them — And just the same in Berlin! — Now there really will be some spying," Schorsch declared.

"It doesn't matter! It can't go on like this for long!" I growled in annoyance.

"My boy shall never be a soldier! Never!" said Maria Uhla, and glanced at her rounded belly. "I'd rather he were a ne'er-do-weel." She smiled softly with resolute assurance.

The peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk came to nothing. The negotiators went home. Trotsky had proclaimed that the war was at an end without signing a treaty. The German armies, in alliance with Russian counter-revolutionaries, went on fighting against Bolshevism and a nation in collapse. The Soviet Foreign Minister had scored a great moral victory, for everyone said it was easy work fighting a defenceless people that has laid down its arms.

A definite peace had been signed with the Ukraine, we heard. Bread would soon be obtained from there. But none came. We heard of a new offensive by Ludendorff on the western front.

From time to time a policeman looked in on me or made inquiries of the other people in the house concerning my actions and movements. Everybody looked askance at me, with something like alarm. I made indirect inquiries about Pegu, for a long time in vain. At last I learned that he had been sent to a military prison in Berlin. Shortly afterwards Schorsch and I were examined once more by the police; we made up our minds that we should be kept in custody, but we were released again.

"I say, that's queer," said Schorsch reflectively, when we were out in the street. "Hm, very queer."

"Maybe things are much shakier than we know," I said as we parted. After that I kept quiet and I was no longer spied upon, except that my letters sometimes seemed to be watched.

15

A Pitiful Interval

SO LONG AS I HAD been carried along, so to speak, on the revolutionary tide, all my everyday annoyances were more or less blotted out. The universal impetus which bore me along kept me in perpetual tension. Every day had its sensation. I fell asleep nursing a hope, and woke again with the expectation of great things.

But now, when the first onset of the discontented masses had — on the surface at least — been rudely checked, now that the will to rebel had been thoroughly eradicated by the arrest of the leaders and by brutal oppression, now the black clouds of poverty closed in upon me once more. Now I was a defenceless individual once more, for whom the most essential problem was: how can you scrape money together, how can you rub along, how can you avoid quarrels with Selma, and what preparations must be made for the coming child. And then, the pawn tickets; and there's cheap jam to be got here, and good value in herrings there, and the gas bill must be paid; and so on.

Besides this, I remembered the drama, and thought of all the weeks that I had wasted. The professor was sure to have seen news of my arrest in the papers, and of course the consequence would be unfavourable to my interests. Moreover, it was near the end of the third month of the scholarship.

I wrote making excuses to my Maecenas and pretended that I had been prevented from coming to see him solely because I was working heart and soul at the play. I said nothing about my arrest. He answered on a postcard: "Don't apologize, dear Mr. Graf! Your work is an ample excuse."

And now for writing the play!

I set to work in a bad temper. I racked my brains for a subject. I remembered that the professor admired Hanns Johst's and Unruh's style. Very good, I said, they wrote poetry, you must put together something exalted and solemn, and as inspired as may be.

The plot was my chief difficulty. I brooded over it for hours together, and at last, after several days' reflection, a revolutionary drama took shape in my mind, at least in outline. Slowly the scenes assumed a more tangible form. Without any clear idea how it was to end, I set to work with might and main to grind out verses. The hero of the play was, of course, a man of artistic temperament, inspired with the newest ideas of universal morality, all idealism, who leads his people to freedom and dies in so doing. That was tragic anyway; for nobody could cavil at a career that ended in death.

I then hunted for a striking title and solved that problem through a dictionary of foreign words: I called it "The Dictator."

"Tribune" would have sounded well too, but "Dictator" conformed better with the times, and it appealed to me as being more powerful, more vigorous. So I wrote neatly, in the centre of a clean sheet of typing paper: "The Dictator, a Tragedy in Three Acts, by Oskar Maria Graf."

Act I, a poor attic, of course. The hero is disputing with his wife because they are in desperate straits. The wife wants her husband to look for remunerative work, but the hero lives in the world of ideas and declares in spirited verse that the people can no longer bear their misery, and that he has no peace. The couple begin to quarrel, and finally the hero leaves her, declaring solemnly:

"I can no more, no more can bear thy railing!
My dreams are ever troubled with the people's wailing!
O thou of little faith, of petty soul!
I leave thee and press on, for great things are my goal!"

The curtain falls. A tumult is heard behind the scenes, implying that the waiting people are acclaiming their leader jubilantly.

The subject began to rouse me. The second act must fairly seethe with action. First the hero made a long speech in a public square; while he was speaking mounted police arrived, there was a clash, fighting, and clamour in hexameters, killed and wounded, and finally a conspirators' meeting in a cellar. The trusty followers bring their wounded leader on a stretcher, he raises himself with a tremendous effort, and of course makes a fiery speech to the little company of the faithful. Suddenly the triumphant shouts of the victorious people are heard outside, and a frenzied voice shouts down into the cellar the inspiring news:

“ Arise, ye slaves of tyrants' scorn,
The people's might prevails and heralds freedom's dawn! ”

They all rush out and carry the leader with them. He raises himself, appeals, with outstretched arms, to Heaven, and exclaims from the stage — speaking, as it were, to the audience:

“ Bold was the fight! Midst wounds and blood
Light breaks upon the people's road,
Hope calls!
Yet woe! alas! when judgment falls! ”

To the closing strains of the Marseillaise the curtain falls on an effective finale. By this time I was really full of enthusiasm for my powerful drama. Only I was quite uncertain what was to happen in the third act.

I pondered half the night. Selma moaned. From time to time she turned on the light, shook asthma powders into a saucer, and put a match to them, inhaling the fumes to help her breathing.

I did not stir, but lay thinking. It is dangerous to lie awake at night like that, when the stillness grows more and more intense. You suddenly realize that you are wasting your little stretch of life in such futilities, in such absurd pomposities. By slow and tormenting degrees you see through your miserable insignificance. The events of your life, bygone days and years, file pitifully before your eyes, everything is passing, slipping away —

Next day I awoke feeling irritable and spiteful. I should certainly have killed the landlady's cat, if she had been sitting on the coal-chest outside the door. Selma was out, it was cold, the furniture looked silly and repulsive, and through the window came the glare of the morning light.

It was some time before I took heart and began the third act. I spurred myself on with the thought that the professor should at least see that I had done my best. But I was no longer convinced of the greatness of my work. Still — this is how it ended: the rebels are victorious, the people assume control, and the idealistic hero is condemned to death as a traitor by his former followers. His wife stands in a gloomy cellar and declaims a long monologue about heroism, and the spirit of the multitude, the masses and humanity.

Though I loathed the whole thing by this time, nevertheless, I breathed a sigh of relief and tried to convince Selma that the professor would be in ecstasies about it. I dispatched the manuscript at once, and a few days later my Maecenas sent for me to meet him and have a talk in the Palace Garden. I saw him in the distance, and realized the whole situation. We paced to and fro. It was a beautiful day.

"Mr. Graf, it is no drama. I ought never to have said anything to you," he began. "No, no, you're not a dramatist. I almost blame myself. Poetry can't be written to order." I agreed timidly. Now and again he looked at me through his glasses. I lost my self-assurance more and more completely.

I let him talk, nodded, and said every now and then: "Yes, yes, that's true — Oh, yes, certainly!" I was profoundly shamed by his honest sympathy, and then the next moment I was panic-stricken at the thought of the scholarship which was sure now to be withdrawn.

"To begin with, that silly, journalistic title!" the professor resumed. "And all the phrase-making! When I think of your poems — so finely developed — and this! All so clumsy — not an idea from beginning to end! You ought to read Kleist. But no, I had better not advise you — No, no; you won't be hurt, you've got a sense of

humour. But the whole thing is a mere hotch-potch — neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring.” I smiled in embarrassment. I did not turn my eyes to him but looked past him when he stood still.

“Yes — but it was only an attempt, sir,” I managed to say at last. But he rejected my plea at once.

“Mr. Graf, a poet must not set himself tasks.”

That was a pleasant doctrine.

“It ought all to spring from genuine necessity — else you’d better never touch a pen again — A poet can’t try to create; do you understand my meaning?” he repeated.

“Yes, sir,” I said, “I will try once more, all the same —” I blurted out the words with the remorseful persistence of a man who sees his error and is determined to make up for it. But my companion maintained his own view.

“Mr. Graf,” he said with a touch of melancholy, “you are so young! What does one error matter? Your poems ring true in every syllable. If you write all the rest like those poems, you will make good. It may be that at some future time you will write a play, but that’s of no importance. All that matters, you see, is to be true to yourself. My dear fellow, you’re only beginning! You have all the world before you —”

I grew more and more confused, and finally I talked wholly at random. When we parted the professor gave me the manuscript. He promised to send me the monthly cheque in a day or two; he could not tell me at the moment whether the scholarship would be further available for me.

I went home and burned the play. Thank God, that was done with, and I should have the hundred marks this month. Come what might, I must provide for the future. I went back to “Simplicissimus.” At the artists table bread-cards were being bought and sold; they were very scarce just then. People wanted to buy meat, sausages, and butter. I pricked up my ears. I remembered a man whose acquaintance I had made at the post office. From him I could procure anything. He lived quite near us. I went to see him. He acted suspicious. I lost patience.

"My good sir," I said, "I have no end of customers — We can earn a good living."

He wanted not money but butter. I went about with my ears open. Selma's employer, the gravestone mason, got quantities of eggs and butter from his country customers, but he would not sell anything. He preferred to let it all get rancid and smell offensive.

"We must get money," I said to Selma. "That fellow lives by the death of others; but for the war he'd be a beggar. Make him give up some butter — it means hard cash for us."

Next evening she brought a pound of butter. I exchanged it for four bread-cards, and obtained five marks for one. My success whetted my zeal. Already I was planning the traffic on a vast scale.

It is true, the intellectuals avoided and scorned me. Everyone said: "There's that little contraband trader," but everyone wanted to buy my wares. In a short time I was known as the man who could supply everything, for I never said: "No," but always: "I'll see; I think I can get it."

A man came my way who was said to have whole storehouses packed full. He had formerly been a barman and, curiously enough, one day he came straight up to me, peered inquisitively into my eyes, and whispered: "Mr. Graf, I've heard you could do with some eggs?"

I nodded cautiously and hesitated for a moment. He said in a business-like tone: "Come and see me tomorrow."

That evening I made cautious inquiries at "Simplicissimus" to discover what was most in demand. One dancer wanted silk stockings, a pimp wanted sardines and the best sausages, a fat man surrounded by a host of ladies was promising to procure the best pre-war soap; I came upon a little Dutchman with a face like a sheep, who had a reputation for immense wealth, and sat down beside him, smiling, and asked what he wanted.

"Tender pig's tongues and ham," he said, and asked what else I had.

"The best chocolate, eggs, fresh butter, and meat — quite fresh," I coolly enumerated my wares.

"Well, here's some money, bring me something tomorrow," he said, and gave me a hundred marks.

"Right," I said, "You will be satisfied."

I went home and could hardly sleep for anticipation. Early in the morning I went to see the former barman. He did not disappoint me. His roomy apartments, furnished in solid middle-class style, were darkened, even to the very parlour. Curtains shut out the daylight. He turned on the electric light, and I felt as if I were in a fairy cave of stalactites. Enormous hams, smoked tongues of all sizes, sausages, and whole sides of bacon hung from long hooks attached to the ceiling, neatly ranged one beside the other. I saw boxes of eggs, materials, silks, shoes, and chocolate; jars of lard, margarine, and butter. In the middle stood a deal table scrubbed clean with two pairs of scales and a row of glittering knives in all sizes. I was thunderstruck and could hardly speak a word. The man led me into another room. There he had bottles of wine and brandy arranged on shelves and numbered. There were soap and all kinds of toilet requisites in the kitchen. Here were incredible quantities of everything that we seemed in these days almost to have forgotten.

With a shudder I remembered the general misery and want; for one moment I thought of informing the police, of proclaiming in the streets what I had seen; then I recovered myself, remembered my own poverty, and murmured: "Hm, there's certainly good business here."

The man was extremely pleasant and took me back to the parlour. He offered me excellent brandy and delicious cakes and ham. Though my mouth watered, I ate absent-mindedly and had no appetite.

"As we said, Mr. Graf, you want to earn money, and I can serve you well. Our interests are identical." Thus he began his disquisition, and handed me a typed price-list. "Terms, Cash," was written at the top.

I said: "Yes, I'll have two pigs' and two calves' tongues — not too heavy, and very tender — and perhaps a ham — but the best quality — Oh, yes, and then silk stockings and soap; I could use

those too." I was cool and business-like again. I put down the hundred mark note. We agreed that I should fetch the goods in the evening. To do so by day was too risky.

The Dutchman was thoroughly satisfied with my supplies and ordered more; and again he advanced me a hundred marks. I speculated to the best of my ability with the balance, and supplied everybody's requirements. It all went swimmingly, there was always money available, and nothing could go amiss now.

At the end of the month the professor told me that my scholarship was to be continued. I was almost more astonished than pleased. I received an enthusiastic letter from him about several poems. I felt inclined to give up illicit trading and write poetry at leisure, but I was caught in the whirlpool of money-making; I was like a gambler who sees the devilish nature of his passion and yet cannot wrench himself free. I earned money far too easily, the adventurous nature of my new occupation was far too exciting, and when a man has spent years in wretched, humiliating insecurity, his appetite gets the better of him: the appetite for a luxurious life, for power, for all the pleasant things that other people possess — people who are well-fed and secure and influential. A man wants to be somebody, not always to be trampled underfoot, always down in his luck.

I had once dined with the sheep-faced Dutchman, whose mistress Marietta now was; I had eaten of dishes such as I had never tasted before, and drunk entrancing wines. In the end we grew merry — we fairly overflowed with merriment. It was like a fairy-tale.

After this I threw myself heart and soul into the business of rapid money-making. I went to "Simplicissimus," sat among the poets and artists, suddenly drew a long piece of sausage out of one waistcoat pocket, and ladies' stockings out of the other, while from my jacket pocket I produced chocolate.

"Do you want any sausages, sir? Sausages! — That's the only thing that really counts!" I interposed in the argument. "And look here, please, silk stockings of the best quality! Chocolate! What would you like? I've got everything!"

I spoke in a tone of vulgar malice. They looked askance at me and forced a spiteful smile.

"What does it all amount to! Pacifism! Humanity! Come, gentlemen, this is the real thing. Eat or be eaten!" I cried with the shameless cunning peculiar to those who shrink from nothing in the struggle for success. The dancer whispered something in the fat man's ear, flourished the stockings with a drunken gesture, snatched the chocolate, and broke into wanton laughter. The fat man took out his pocket-book and paid. Everybody fixed covetous eyes on the money. I pocketed it carelessly, like an insignificant trifle. And this kind of thing happened again and again. I got drunk, and no longer went home at night. I had never been good at accounts. The money melted as fast as I earned it. And of course I only grew more eager in the chase.

"Don't be a fool! Money? There's always money at hand! There's some for you!" I snapped at Selma when she reproached me. Our relation had developed into one of angry hostility. When she came home I went out in search of other society.

I went to see my purveyor, the ex-barman. He was very amiable to his best customer. We lounged in his parlour and pledged brotherly love over our cups. He filled my glass again and again. I raised it to my lips and emptied it each time at a single draught. Gradually my brain became clouded. I grew sentimental, as melancholy as an old maid, and then shouted wildly till the odious mood wore off.

"Always this filthy money! This vile money!" I grumbled. I began to cry as I gulped brandy.

"There's no foul smell with money! Business first and last! Business!" urged my new friend. I sniffed the notes. True, there was no foul smell. I laughed noisily and fell over the chair dead drunk. Everything was spinning round.

"Brandy for me! Money for me, and a life that sends the bits of notes flying!" I bawled, and raised myself unsteadily. "What does the whole muck-heap matter to us! There's corruption on all sides! Brandy for me! We've got to corrupt them all!"

I did not return home till morning. I was utterly deranged, body and soul.

I drove in taxis, was constantly making new business connections, and served my customers promptly and well; and their number increased daily.

I made friends with the Dutchman and often visited him. At his house we guzzled, tippled, and behaved like madmen. He was always surrounded by a host of fawning artists and people in embarrassed circumstances. They toadied, and lauded everything that he did to the skies. We caroused and guzzled for days and nights together. That was the picture I had always had as a boy of the sinful Roman world of which the priest and the teacher told me.

I was myself a Roman, and liked myself in the part.

I sank gradually into a slough of indifference. From time to time I met the professor or the Red Cross man and deceived them with stories of vast literary schemes. I launched out into hypocritical discussions with them concerning the great and serious times in which we lived.

"What a man wishes to hear, he will hear," was my motto.

And so time passed by.

YOU'RE GOING TO THE BAD," said Maria Uhla to me one day, and she looked me frankly in the face. "You're utterly contemptible."

I looked distressed and tried to make fun of her declaration by cynical retorts. She refused to be put off.

"What are you really aiming at?" she asked bluntly.

"I? Nothing; nothing at all! To eat well and drink plenty and earn a pile of money," I answered roughly.

"You're deceiving yourself!" she interposed, and held me with her eyes. "You're doing all this simply because you're afraid of yourself! You're carrying on illicit trade and making money to pacify Selma. You drink because you don't want to stop and think. You're deceiving your professor because you know very well that he's a cleaner man than you. You refuse to talk frankly with anyone and keep on telling rotten jokes, because if you don't you'll realize your miserable condition." She stopped for breath and added, in a different tone: "And you're the unhappiest soul alive."

"That may be," I murmured, for her words had touched me to the quick; but I reverted at once, to my usual tone: "But I'm doing very well! For whose sake should I be honest, for whom should I live? A fellow may be called up any day, and be shot for no good purpose whatever!"

She paused a little.

"Do you think I would change places with you? Schorsch and I wouldn't live your life for a single day — and goodness knows, we're hard enough up," she challenged me once more.

I shrugged my shoulders and snorted.

"One day you'll throw it all over and go and bury yourself," she resumed.

"That may well be," I replied again.

Schorsch came from the city. We had tea and talked about public events. The courts-martial had set to work with ruthless fury after the January strike. Sentences had been brutal. The prisons were packed with insurgents. It seemed that every trace of insurrection had been wiped out. They needed soldiers at the front. Even the most hopelessly unfit were re-examined and sent for active service. The spring offensive had begun and was raging furiously in the west, tanks and poison gas were plying their terrible task more violently than ever. Suddenly the offensive faltered and collapsed. The newspaper reports were ambiguous. But gradually the most disturbing accounts leaked through.

"It's hopeless. Nothing but assassination can do any good after this," I said. We parted in gloom.

"I shall look for work again, now," I said to Selma.

"Yes; or write something and send it in," said she. I made some surly reply.

"Or look for clerical work," she resumed. I nodded again.

A girl handicraft worker had told me a few days earlier that clerical workers were needed in the Coal Distribution Office. I applied and was taken on. It was sedentary work. The same questions and answers were repeated all day long: "Are you a sub-tenant? Have you a flat of your own? How many rooms? No, offices count as business premises. Yes, you are entitled to two hundred-weight —" And so on.

The work only lasted four weeks. Contraband trade was now being quite openly carried on. Prices were already fantastic, but you could buy butter, lard, eggs, and meat secretly in every shop.

My purveyor met me in the street, made a bee line for me, and took me to his flat.

"My dear fellow, what's wrong? Why don't you want my things any more? Aren't they good quality? Why do you look like that?"

he inquired, almost anxiously, and he poured me out a glass of brandy.

I shook my head. His words disgusted me.

He pressed me further. I grumbled about the war.

"We're neither carrying on the war, nor losing it either," he said. He poured me out more brandy.

I looked up and said: "I'll tell you what. I'm appalled at the whole thing."

The fellow was moved, stood solidly before me and patted me on the shoulder, as if he wanted to restore my spirits. He exclaimed candidly: "Oskar! I'll tell you something. You know me! I'm not fooling you. Oskar! Put money by, there are rotten times coming. Money is everything! It's all the same to us where we get it!"

I made no reply and swallowed one glass of brandy after another. He showed me his stores. He was upset about me. We sat together for some hours and got drunk again.

My dull brain was a medley of confused ideas: What of it? What of it? It was all the same! Nothing mattered! All meaningless folly! The fellow was right! Money is everything! Money, money, and nothing else!

I snorted like a horse and went on drinking. I was sick and suffered with pains in my stomach.

"Come brothers, drink and fill the can! Here's long life to the veteran!" he sang hoarsely. He stumbled, glowered at me with glassy eyes, and repeated: "Co-ome, bro-others, dri-ink and fi-ill the can! Here's lo-ong li-i-ife to the ve-e-eteran. A f-f-faithful se-ervant in his ti-me — Hul-lo, Oskar, your health! Hul-lo, you swine! Drink, my boy, drink! — The ve-e-eteran ——" I rose.

"Yes," I said, "I'll go on with the traffic, you swine!" And I did so. But all the life was gone out of it. I had become a careless merchant. If a deal succeeded, well and good, if it failed, well and good also.

One day I met Hobrecker in the street with Schorsch. His fortune was scattered to the winds. He was poor again, or, as he expressed it: "It's hard going once more."

We caroused with him till late in the night, and he took us to his hotel.

He ordered red wine and cold meat. He obtained whatever he wanted here, as elsewhere. We ate and drank and were merry.

"Oskar, old man! I say, you're a greenhorn! I'm in a pickle at the moment, but I'll have thousands in a few days. You can come then," said Hobrecker.

He talked of prodigious secret deals in pictures, of connections with a Ukrainian oil company, and he would get himself worked up over these fantasies. He told us about his love affairs at great length and in startling detail.

"The war! What's the war! Willy Hobrecker will soon have a place among the big industrialists!" he cried, hoarse with drink.

I stared at him. It was overwhelming to see him standing there again in his shabby brown suit and worn patent leather shoes, taking out a bundle of pawn tickets and counting them with boisterous merriment: "Dress-suit, smoking-jacket, two cabin trunks, a gold watch-chain, a gold watch, a morning-suit, an overcoat, an ulster, a silk hat, books, a dozen shirts, fourteen pairs of shoes, two gold cases, three walking-sticks with ivory or silver handles." He burst out laughing. "My fortune is laid up neatly in camphor!"

When we left him day was already breaking. Schorsch had taken with him a half-empty bottle of burgundy, and he said again and again: "I'll take this to Mary. She'll be pleased. It enriches the blood."

I plodded home along the deserted streets and thought continually: "He's the only one who really lives. His is a fine life — like the lilies of the field."

Selma was already preparing to go to her office, and she looked at me reproachfully.

"I'm going back to selling contraband. You won't have to go to the office much longer," I said casually.

Two days later I happened to read in the paper that an unemployed teacher by the name of Wilhelm Hobrecker, from Remscheid, had been arrested for dealing in counterfeit pictures and

forging cheques. Later he was sentenced to some years' imprisonment. Since then I have completely lost sight of him, and never heard of him again.

Maria Uhla had already given birth to a boy. While she was in the maternity home Schorsch knocked together a minimum of furniture with thin boards, and one day we took a handcart and brought his possessions from Sendling to Schwabing, where he had found a studio after a prolonged search. That evening when I got home Selma was lying on the sofa writhing in pain.

"It's bound to come soon," she groaned.

I hurried to the doctor, fetched the midwife, and put Selma to bed. I walked to and fro in the studio next to the bedroom, kept on boiling water over the gas, and helped the midwife every now and then when she came out of the bedroom. But in the end we had to send for the ambulance. In the hospital Selma gave birth to a girl. I ran round and carried on my trade. I did not visit the mother and child till the following day. I felt embarrassed in the rôle of happy father.

This too! Another tie! I thought as I returned home. I resolved to earn as much as possible so as to be able to take a large flat. I wasted days running round with contraband merchandise and had no time for anything else. Selma was with me all day now. The child cried and kicked. I scarcely dared look at it and could hardly bring myself to touch it, for I was afraid of hurting it. From my earliest childhood I have always felt helpless myself in the presence of helpless creatures. I have something like a terror of them.

"Are you going out again? Do stay here," said Selma nearly every evening.

"I must attend to business. We must get out of this quagmire," I said by way of excuse. I did not breathe freely till I was out in the street. I went to the "Dichthelei" or "Simplicissimus."

The Red Cross man and his wife met me and congratulated me. I forced a happy smile.

I preferred the professor's attitude. He looked a little anxious and said: "An artist ought not to have children." Then, as if to

console me, he added, the bitter-sweet reflection: "But there are exceptions."

We walked along side by side in silent meditation. I tried with hesitating words to feign happiness.

"You know, sir, I need constant friction if I am to be stimulated to do creative work," I said. He gazed at me somewhat searchingly and queried particularly: "Friction? My dear fellow, there's something strange in your voice — However," he paused for a moment and sighed imperceptibly, "every man must dree his own weird. And that's truer of a poet than of anyone else."

I was silent. Nor did he speak again until we parted.

About this time I made the acquaintance of a girl student who was often in the company of artists and expressed a violent dislike of me. "There's that odious creature again," I heard her say one day. I took no notice. I, on the other hand, liked her particularly from the very first. I made unobtrusive efforts to approach her. She was a friend of the handicraft worker who had told me of the work in the Coal Distribution Office. I had known the latter for some time, and once I gave her some of my poems and a story.

"And — and, do show them to the dark girl," I said quickly and shyly, and laughed faintly. The handicraft girl nodded shrewdly and smiled likewise. A few days later I met them both in the street, accosted them, and asked how they had liked my work.

"Very much," said the handicraft girl, but I saw from the way she said it that she had not read them at all.

I turned to the student with a peculiar childish audacity: "And — and, I suppose you didn't like it all — ?" I felt the blood rush to my cheeks as I spoke.

"Oh, yes, I read them — You have great talent," she replied.

"Really?" I asked, concealing my violent emotion.

"Yes, really. It — it's beautiful: 'For in our souls from childhood's hour the inmost essence of all marvels grows, and silently the sweetness of all nights glides past,'" she said. To conceal my joy I made silly remarks and laughed coarsely, saying: "Oh, yes, most illicit traders have lyrical tendencies, you know — It's only because

they have to go about at night — Darkness stimulates their genius.”

The handicraft girl thought that very funny, and the student forced a smile.

And so began what all poets have celebrated in song, and what really determined my future.

I visited Schorsch almost daily in his new studio. Maria Uhla was a rapturously happy mother. In spite of their poverty she retained her true womanly gaiety of soul. Suddenly she was laid low and died of septic poisoning of the womb. After the funeral my friend packed a rucksack and went to the mountains for a few weeks. He seemed utterly shattered.

And then, as if we must always go through similar experiences, Selma fell ill shortly afterwards. She had influenza badly, and the child caught it too. Both had to go to the hospital.

I had to procure money by any and every means. I bought a great deal from my purveyor and rushed about. Finally the Dutchman came to my assistance with a few hundred marks. I went to see Selma.

“Have you got some money at last?” she asked.

“Yes, don’t you worry,” I answered, and showed her the notes. She breathed a sigh of relief.

“You’re a good boy,” she said tenderly. She stretched out her arms and kissed me.

“Oh yes — but don’t praise me, don’t do that — I’m only doing my duty,” I said, almost repulsing her, and I left her with melancholy feelings.

Next day my brother Maurus turned up; he had been at home on leave for a week. I was genuinely pleased. We talked about books and poets as we had done in the old days. He was reconciled. Later Nanny came after a long, long absence, and we all three visited Selma in the hospital.

Maurus had to leave that evening at eleven.

“I say, Maurus, just hit out at a sergeant or an officer — just refuse to obey orders, or to go into the trenches!” I said to him. He laughed a weary, ironical laugh and shook his head.

"You can do that — I can't," he answered.

"You'll see; you won't be out there another three months," I resumed. "Either peace or revolution is bound to come."

"Oh, you ass!" he scoffed incredulously.

We had supper in a tavern and our spirits rose. I told of my illicit dealings in a voice of pride.

"Oh, well — no doubt that pays better than poetry," he exclaimed, and added pointedly: "I've no doubt you're a good business man — You're a dab hand at cheating ——"

"Oh, come, when he's got nothing! There's nobody to help him," said Nanny. In the evening light we loitered along in the best of spirits.

"Oh, yes, you'll never be in difficulties! You fib your way through life with the best of cheer — Hm hm," scoffed Maurus, and shook his head from time to time.

We accompanied him to the station. He left for the front like a hundred others. He went straight to Verdun. To the thickest of the fight.

"Oskar," said Nanny as we parted, looking with childlike and loving candour into my eyes, "I think there's a lot of trouble still before you."

I forced a laugh and pretended to be happy.

"Oh — trouble! There's no such thing! Everybody is responsible for his own fate! Mine is all right. Come and see us more often," I answered, and went on my way.

The Approaching Shock

WHILE I WAS BUSY with my dubious traffic, spending days and nights drinking with the Dutchman, frequenting the artists' haunts, while I passed my time in this trifling, continually considering the possibility of running away to a strange town, and made no attempt to check the gradual ruin of our married life, while all this was going on, public events began to move at a break-neck pace.

Germany's transformation into a parliamentary State had begun, rumours were afloat of the failure and retreat of our troops, the question of the monarchy flared up, the papers made no secret of Austria's collapse, Magyars and Czechs were accused of cowardice, and, the first enemy aeroplanes reached Munich—a terrifying signal of the approaching breakdown. The alarm was sounded. At first people stared curiously up into the sky. The trams stopped, and nobody was particularly frightened. But the second time there was a scare, and the spirit of unrest gathered force.

"This wholesale slaughter must stop!" was demanded even by the most respectable citizen.

"It's all the Kaiser's fault! He must go!" was the general cry.

Ludwig Thoma and Admiral Tirpitz addressed public meetings in support of national resistance to the last drop of blood. The admiral brandished doughty phrases, the poet made a very poor, common-place speech. In reality, people only went to see the distinguished speakers. Nobody was any longer interested in the latest catchword.

"National resistance?! It's just a new swindle! It just means that the small man is to get his head broken and the big man to

grab more! " a man in the brewery hall shouted to the crowd, and no one contradicted him.

Most people nodded: " He's right! " Much wilder rumours began to circulate. Decrees were ignored with scornful indifference. The press became more outspoken about parliamentary developments. Moreover, a new Reichstag election was due. There were leaflets, posters, processions, and food demonstrations. People carried sandwich boards with such mottoes as: " Peace and Bread! " " Bread and an Immediate Peace! " and here and there fresh conflicts with the police broke out. The embittered masses grew immensely bolder. Mobs were an everyday sight. The amnesty had set the revolutionaries at liberty again, and they worked with might and main.

Every day we were more conscious that the machinery of law and order, supposedly so secure, was getting out of gear. The sight of the black, thronging crowds marching along the streets almost made one believe that a dangerous river had broken its banks and was flooding the whole country.

Every day brought some piece of news. I let everything slide. The days passed like a fever-dream. I ran with Schorsch to attend every meeting. It was only occasionally that I went among the artists. They appeared unmoved. Always the same arguments about expressionism, Van Gogh, and Cezanne, evening after evening. " Art will be the first to feel our power! " I interposed, brazen and savage. " It must be cleared out, root and branch. " Nobody disputed my words. At most one or two would smile ironically.

Eisner spoke in the Schwabing Brewery as an Independent Socialist candidate, and attacked his opponent, the Social Democrat, Erhard Auer, violently. He dealt with his opponents savagely, in a voice hoarse with fanatical passion. He was surrounded by a closely packed crowd, row upon row. He stood on the platform amidst the sitting multitude, and his gestures at times were frenzied. His long hair flowed almost to his shoulders, and his beard was even more ragged than formerly. He looked like an apostle, except for his eyeglasses.

" You see me as Stadelheim restored me to liberty! " he cried,

or something of the kind, and there was a note of vanity in his words. He was greeted with tumultuous applause. "Ladies and gentlemen, the revolution will wipe out this election. At one stroke new powers will arise and will point the way to the downtrodden masses!" he cried again with vehement emotion. "And he who gives his vote to the men that passed the war credits, to the scoundrels who helped to bring upon us all the misery of this most bloody slaughter of the people! — he who votes for Auer sets the seal of his approval on the crime and declares it just and right!"

"Down with the traitors!" The cry re-echoed on all sides.

"Put Auer under lock and key!"

"Long live the Independent Socialist Party!" the people shouted in conclusion. After a warning not to form a procession the crowd left the hall.

A few days later the Democrats held a meeting in Wagner Hall. The late Professor Max Weber held forth on "the new political order in Germany." He advocated a united State, the abdication of the Kaiser, and a complete change in our foreign policy. "The cry which is raised so menacingly in Bavaria nowadays, the cry of 'Separation from Prussia!' is a criminal folly!" he once exclaimed. There he stood, tall, shabbily dressed in an evening coat, a respectable Democrat from Baden. He replied skilfully and firmly to the interruptions.

"If you ask, whether or no national resistance, I say: Let the men at the front reply!" he said drily. He spoke sharply against militarism, and demanded taxes on wealth to pay for the war.

"It is nonsense, it would be a crime, it is impossible, that capitalist society should be transformed by revolution into the State of the future based on Socialist principles!" he declared coldly, amid the shouts of the audience. "We should have the enemy in our midst, and after that the worst kind of reaction!" he answered. The revolutionaries, who had turned up in large numbers, raised a laugh.

There were heated interjections, and during the discussion I saw Erich Mühsam again for the first time. He shouted wildly: "Ask

the men at the front what they think about peace!" and called upon the women to increase the peace demonstrations. I was trembling all over as I stood on the high, half-domed platform and shouted boorishly:

"The revolution is coming! It is upon us! I call upon the soldiers to refuse obedience and leave the barracks!"

From below in the hall came a flood of abuse and a torrent of applause. I stopped abruptly and descended from the platform. Another man stood there who, when he was given a commission, had refused to accept it. He shouted louder still: "Yes! Yes! Destroy your rifles! Just refuse to carry on the swindle!"

"Low-down deserters!" roared and hissed some in the crowd. And the next day the papers described us as such.

"It will break out in three days! Long live the world revolution!" an unseen man in the gallery bawled to the people below, who turned to look up. Most of them laughed.

"Ah, yes, peace is coming now— Army headquarters have demanded it— That sort of thing takes time," I heard from a fat, comfortable citizen. It almost upset my assurance. So cool, such confidence in the authorities; he spoke as if they would take all proper steps. And how extraordinary to hear: "Army headquarters have demanded it." Queer, I thought, hitherto they have demanded a million fresh soldiers or cannon, now they demand peace! I am almost curious to know whether they won't actually demand revolution.

Next day—it was announced in black type—came the sudden news of the sailors' mutiny at Kiel. For the first time we read in plain terms: "After a few hours red flags were waving from all the men-of-war. The Admiralty has submitted to the decrees of the Soldiers' Council. The advancing troops went over to the mutineers."

Schorsch came to meet me, waving the paper from a distance. We must have stood a full half hour in his studio reading the news again and again. "And in Germany, Oskar! I could never have believed that such a thing would happen in Germany!" cried Schorsch over and over again.

"You'll really believe soon that the revolution is coming!" I said.

"Yes, indeed, it's coming now. I'm eaten up with curiosity," he admitted.

To be quite honest, we were amazed rather than excited.

The Independent Socialists had called a meeting for that same evening in the small hall at the Hacker Beer Cellar. When we arrived we heard that there was a crowd assembled on Theresa Common. "I say," said Schorsch with a strange note in his voice, "suppose it breaks out to-day." We reached the open space below the Bavaria, dripping with perspiration, just in time to hear Eisner shouting in the dark to a packed throng:

"I wager my life that Munich will rise within a day or two!" He swore it solemnly. A shiver ran down my back.

"Kiel! Do what they did at Kiel!" shouted several voices, and they made a move to do so.

"Spies! Don't let yourselves be decoyed!" The warning was given by a man with a stentorian voice.

"Wait and see!" we heard occasionally. And in the end the crowd dispersed. Most people were grumbling. One said with brutal frankness:

"The cowardly dog! He's always saying: it's coming, and never acts. All he cares for is to get followers!" I, too, was disappointed. On all sides the example of Kiel was cited as encouragement. And not a soul could tell the real reason why nobody took the first step in the revolution now, at once, on the spot. This gave rise to suspicion.

The newspapers gave more or less ironical reports next day of this meeting in the dark.

"Just look, that's what they do when nothing happens. It's all made to look ridiculous and the people will be alienated," I snarled to Schorsch; I was boiling with rage. There was nothing else for it but individual terrorist acts, I declared. During those days I felt as if I were shut in a barrel that was being shaken perpetually, so that I was myself flung from side to side all the time. I performed

my ordinary daily tasks mechanically. I visited Selma and talked to her indifferently. No sooner had I left her than I forgot all about her. The dark girl had taken clerical work. I met her in the evenings, and talked in just the same absent manner, I discussed every conceivable subject with the professor, but was hardly conscious of what was said. I concluded bargains, drank with the Dutchman, and went about. I had no rest, no power of consecutive thought. From time to time, quite suddenly, I listened eagerly, like a dog on the scent.

"What does it concern me!" I grumbled angrily to myself, in order to check my excitement. But that was so utterly false, so silly! *Everything* concerned me, *everything* that lived and moved!

What, then, did I really want?

Ask a man who is mad with rage what he wants when he hurls himself upon his enemy!

Ask what a prisoner wants, when he hears insurgents in the neighbouring cells overpowering the warders, dashing along the corridors, and escaping!

Movement, excitement, anything to avoid inactivity: perhaps that was what I wanted.

After all, maybe Pegu was really right when he said: "You are a nihilist! People like that are no good in a revolution!"

Unaccustomed events had swept me out of the accustomed path. It was really beginning! To use a poetical simile, it was as if I were standing in the sea and waiting for a mighty wave to lift me up and carry me far away.

What followed was of small importance; at least to me.

I read the Bolshevik programme, Landauer's "Call to Socialism," and other revolutionary leaflets and pamphlets. But they only repeated the well-known phrases with everlasting sameness! What were they to me. Up and at it, just let fly! And that, with me, was how everything began and ended.

Every Fissure Cracks

VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING a bell rang. I raised myself sleepily in bed and grumbled. I did not want to answer the bell. Someone was banging loudly at the studio door. At last I jumped up and opened it. Selma's father was there. I had only seen him cursorily two or three times. He was a widower, and a locksmith. His children had left him, all except the eldest son who lived with him and acted as foreman. But neither took much notice of the other; each lived his own life. The old man had long been a member of a pious sect; he studied the Bible and believed in hypnotism.

"*That* man?— You mean to marry him?— He's got the head of a criminal! You'll see how long the Lord will stand aside. You're making straight for perdition!" he had said to Selma, when she told him of our matrimonial intentions. He did not show his face again till the child was born. He spoke little, merely quoting some Bible text—generally something menacing—in a surly voice. Most of the time he cast furtive, almost scoffing, glances at me, and smiled strangely. He looked at me now with the same smile, nodded his big, shaggy, grey head tremulously, and said: "Ah, yes, it's coming now. She didn't believe me." He fixed his baggy, watery eyes upon me.

"What?" I asked sullenly.

"Yes, yes; He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee," he gabbled, as he stood there, a bent old man.

"She's in the hospital," I said and cast an angry glance at him because of his malicious grin.

"I've made inquiries already. I know," he conceded, and held me with his eyes.

"Shall we go and see her?" I asked.

He nodded, and said something about the seven angels with the seven plagues. He seemed lost in thought. I left him standing there, and went into the next room to get ready.

"Don't you believe in the Lord God, then?" he asked me abruptly, when I came out of the bedroom.

"Oh, yes," I answered indifferently, and wanted to start.

"Then why did you marry her?" he persisted. I could not refrain from a slight laugh and said:

"That has nothing to do with the Lord God ——?"

He gazed at me with an expression of dull melancholy and nodded once or twice: "Indeed, indeed ——" Then he gabbled again in a monotonous voice, like a lesson mechanically committed to memory: "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to tempting spirits and doctrines of devils." He paused, then spoke as if he were conversing with himself alone: "It's the lunar revolution — That same woman of Ingolstadt spat out thirty-seven nails and splinters of glass — so there; that's what you call believing in witchcraft, isn't it? Isn't it? But you'll see all in good time." I recalled the story of the woman possessed by the devils, who was made to spit out broken glass and nails. He generally told it mixed up with Bible texts.

"Oh, confound it! Let's go now," I said crossly, and flung the door open. He followed me, grumbling under his breath.

By Selma's bed in the hospital, he barely asked how she was. He launched out straightway into Bible texts again, spoke of the coming dawn of the millennium and interspersed strange illustrations.

"And how are you?" asked Selma.

"Oh — I? You can see for yourself! I have nothing to fear," he exclaimed, and regarded us as one to whom the gates of heaven are open, and who takes pleasure in seeing the damned around him.

We let him talk.

"And how is your revolution getting on?" asked Selma during a pause.

"Oh, that won't be long now," I said indifferently. The old man laughed and looked askance at us. He pointed his finger at me and said suddenly. "*He?* He'll desert you! You'll see. You never believed me."

Selma smiled. I looked distressed.

"You're talking rubbish!" said Selma crossly to the old man. But he was not listening. He sat there looking vacantly into space. His gnarled hands were folded idly on his bony knees. His wits really seemed to have wandered right away from the world. His dirty, ragged garments hung loosely about him, his wrinkled, hairy face was expressionless, his eyes were dull. The patients in the beds round about gazed at him with something like fear. He recited once more in a monotonous voice: "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; He was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, and received up in glory."

I left the hospital with him.

Out in the streets I saw great yellow posters with large type, warning people against violence. This was a decree prohibiting the expected demonstrations. Social Democrats and Independent Socialists were calling upon the masses to assemble on the Theresa Common at three o'clock that afternoon.

"Well, I must go now," I said to the old man, and let him get into a tram. I hurried to Schorsch.

"Something decisive may happen to-day," said my friend as we set out. We met various acquaintances.

A working woman was tearing down all the posters with the decree. From time to time she shouted: "Long live the revolution!" There was not a policeman in sight. The nearer we came to the Common, the greater were the crowds. Everybody was hurrying. There was a packed throng before the Bavaria, and every minute augmented it. Men were speaking on the slopes and from the steps of the monument. Here and there a red flag was raised.

"Three cheers for the red flag!" cried some, and others again:

"Down with it!" The crowd surged restlessly, the air grew stifling. At last we discovered Eisner, who was speaking at the top of his voice farther away on a side slope. When he paused a moment for breath, we heard the voices of the other speakers. More and more people came, and still more. The crowd stretched further than the eye could see; it was like an ant-hill, black and swarming.

"Good Lord, all Munich is here to-day. Now's the chance! I hope they won't go home again to-day and do nothing," I said to Schorsch. A bearded giant in a soldier's uniform had heard me; he smiled superciliously and said with the air of one who knows everything:

"No, no, we ain't going home to-day. We're going somewhere quite different. It's just beginning."

"Long live peace!" cried the people around me at this moment. "Pe-eace!" the cry passed from mouth to mouth and re-echoed into the crowd. And they all roared tumultuously: "Long live Eisner! Long live the world revolution!" For about a minute there was silence. Cries of applause came from the Bavaria. We forced our way up the slope.

Suddenly Felix Fechenbach in a field-grey uniform shouted to the surging throng in a loud voice, almost a tone of military command: "Comrades! Our leader, Kurt Eisner, has spoken. It's no good to waste more words! Follow, all who are for the revolution! Follow me! March!" And all at once the bawling mob began to press forwards. Thousands and thousands of people surged up the slope into the street, like a wild, black wave; they marched along rapidly, past locked houses with shutters let down, straight to the barracks. We marched too, wedged in by the mob in its tumultuous advance, almost at the head and barely five paces from Eisner, on whom I kept my eyes continually. He was pale and gazed before him with passionate solemnity; he did not speak a word. It almost seemed as though the suddenness of events had taken him unawares. Now and again he stared straight in front of him, half-anxious and half-bewildered. He walked arm in arm with the broad-shouldered, blind peasant leader, Gandorfer, with his mighty stride. Gandorfer

moved far more freely, stepping out sturdily and firmly, just like a Bavarian peasant. The two men were surrounded by shock-troops, consisting of their most trusty followers.

The march had begun and was not to be checked. There was no resistance. The police seemed to have vanished. Inquisitive faces gazed down upon us from the many open windows in the houses. At every point fresh bands joined us, and now some were armed. Most of the people laughed and chattered, as though they were going to a fair. From time to time I turned round and looked back. It seemed that the whole town was marching. We learned that sailors had stormed the royal palace.

"That way, that way! Quicker! It's broken out there!" cried someone behind us, and everyone began to run. There was a wild struggle. We rushed in at the open door of the Guldein School. Suddenly we found ourselves packed closely in a dark passage.

"Stop!" somebody yelled. "Sto-op!" the cry was repeated more faintly and died away.

"There, you dog!" yelled somebody in the front, and there was a tremendous tumult. I resisted with both elbows and wanted to push on. But those in front were already pressing back again and thrusting us out into the street. The sharp report of a rifle caused a moment's silence, then it was lost in yells and trampling once more. As if at a given signal, the mob stormed into the passage, and now I saw armed men among them. There was confused talking and screams, and suddenly someone in an upper story flung open a window, waved a red flag out of it, and shouted: "The soldiers have declared for the revolution! They've all come over! March on, march on! Onwards!"

"Three cheers! Long live the revolution!" yelled everyone in the street, and soldiers came out of the Guldein School, some with rifles and some without, with red handkerchiefs tied round the barrels. The procession whirled through the city. Here and there a body of armed soldiers turned aside and vanished into a house. As we crossed the Donnersberg Bridge for the first time a paymaster-sergeant in uniform got in among the crowd. His epaulettes were

torn off and a few of the crowd hustled him. He began to cry and raised his hands appealingly. The giant wanted to attack him, but I thrust them all aside and prevented it.

"Let him go! It's not his fault!" I roared at the top of my voice. At first the giant stared in astonishment, then he assumed a menacing attitude towards me. Others joined him.

"Off with you, fellow!" I yelled to the terrified paymaster. But he was so bewildered that he stood still.

"Youngster!" snarled the giant at me, and he seized my arm.

Then somebody close by shouted: "No brawling! That's Graf! Come on!" And when I looked round a syndicalist was standing between me and the giant, scolding like a fishwife. The incident was over.

"I thought you were one of the others!" the giant chuckled, and clapped me on the back. "Oh, well, you're right. We can let the little chap go. No harm meant, comrade!" We linked arms good-humouredly and marched on. The paymaster had disappeared.

"All the same, I don't like seeing a fellow like that!" said my companion from time to time.

Most of the barracks surrendered without a struggle. And some little method was acquired in these attacks: a small company stormed into the building and the mass waited outside. A few minutes later a red flag appeared at one of the windows, and the air resounded with tremendous cheers when the company returned.

And now the procession divided, part marching in one direction, part in another. "They're going to shoot, at the Max II barracks," was whispered from ear to ear. That spurred us on more eagerly than ever.

But it turned out otherwise. The sentry flung his rifle away immediately and joined us. We rushed through the big gate straight into the broad courtyard. It was strange; an oldish officer was standing before a company of soldiers in ranks, drilling them. He did not even look round. Somebody hit him violently on the head from behind and knocked his helmet right down over his ears. He fell without a sound, and the next moment the soldiers flung their

rifles on the ground with a crash, as if at a word of command, so that they were completely smashed. They came over to us laughing. "It's all up! Revolution! March!" I heard in the midst of the uproar. One fellow from the mountains yelled as they do in Alpine dances. A little on one side someone was addressing a crowd and calling on the people to form Soldiers' Councils. The procession marched out into the open in the direction of the military prison. It was shut up and silent. People fetched ladders and shafts, stones were thrown at the barred windows, menacing cries re-echoed, a few soldiers pounded the locked door with rifles and axes, and everybody was ready for an assault. At this point the door flew open and we all rushed in. I was literally swept along, and did not recover my wits till I found myself upstairs in the cold, stuffy, noisy passages. I can see to this day the cell doors being opened and the prisoners coming out. One gazed at us round-eyed and amazed, started convulsively, and suddenly burst into heartbreaking sobs. Then he fell exhausted into the arms of a little man and clung to him. He sobbed again and again: "Oh tha-ank-you, tha-ank-you! God bl-bless you, God bless you!"

"Vengeance!" yelled the mob, and again: "Vengeance on the oppressors!" Thereupon people began to hunt for the warders and officials. Down below we heard a tremendous row, and blows with clubs and the butts of rifles. Then a man shouted: "Take it easy! Take it easy!"

Apparently they were lynching someone. I could see nothing. But people near me said: "It's all up with them!"

Then a voice roared above the tumult: "Everybody clear out! The troops are coming!" The crowd made a wild rush for the open in utter confusion, and they did not discover that it was a false alarm till they got downstairs. Clusters of people were dotted about, each listening to a speaker appealing for the immediate formation of Soldiers' Councils. At last they turned towards the city. The streets seemed too narrow, every man jack joined the swelling stream. Every now and then an officer got in among the crowd, and was pushed and had his epaulettes and his cockade torn off. Not

one resisted. Most of them were bewildered and as pale as death. A few actually joined the procession straightway.

At Isartor Square I ran into the hairdresser's shop to see Nanny. "Revolution! Revolution! We're victorious!" I shouted to her triumphantly. She dropped her hot tongs and beamed. I was gone in a flash.

About eight o'clock that evening we reached the Franciscan Beer Cellar, on the other side of the Isar. There we heard that the Majority Socialists, led by Auer, had marched through the city to the strains of a band in an orderly and disciplined manner, and had dispersed at the Max Monument. At this news there was a burst of ribald, tumultuous laughter. "Stinkers! Schoolboys!" jeered everybody.

"That's the army of the reaction!" somebody cried, and from all sides came the response: "Yes, you bet! That's it!" The packed throng of people stood there, uncertain what to do next. It was said that Eisner would speak in the hall. The revolution was victorious. Everything had fallen into the hands of the rebels: the mails and telegraphs, the railway station and the royal palace, the Parliament House and the Ministry.

I was hungry.

"Let's go to the bar and have something to eat and drink," I said to Schorsch. We elbowed our way through and entered the smoke-filled bar. Customers with true Munich faces were sitting there, stolid and indifferent. Nothing had penetrated to this retreat. "Wally, a ham!" called a stout, round-faced man to the waitress. A man was eating at one table, at another they were playing cards as usual. Nobody troubled about us.

"Well, I'll be damned!" was all I could stammer, so dumb-founded was I. We ordered beer and sausages, and swallowed it all hastily. I listened carefully for a single word from one or other of the customers concerning the day's events. Not a syllable, absolutely nothing about all that had occurred.

"Wally, a ham!" That was all that went on here.

When we left the tavern the mob had dispersed. We hurried to

the city and heard that Workers' and Soldiers' Councils were being elected in the Mathes Brewery.

The streets were teeming with activity and life. Companies of soldiers and crowds of people were everywhere to be seen. The air was full of rumours. No trams were running.

Numbers of people were wandering up and down before the royal palace. From time to time threats were shouted up at the darkened windows. Above the sentry-box the red flag was already flying. I left my friend and fetched the dark girl.

"It's revolution and peace!" I panted, and we went back to the royal palace. There we came upon the Dutchman and Marietta, impelled by curiosity to come and see.

"Now there's an end of luxury and magnificence!" I said with concealed malice. My words were aimed at the rich man. He did not understand.

"It's a fairy-tale," said Marietta again and again. It was late at night when we started for home. After the dark girl had left me I accompanied the Dutchman. We spent the whole night drinking in his rooms. When I staggered home in the grey dawn the streets of Schwabing were empty and silent. Now and then a distant shot was heard. The city was asleep. The revolution, it seemed, was enjoying repose. The great grey arch of the sky stretched peacefully above the houses.

"Action! Bang! Bang! Bang! A-a-action!" I suddenly yelled crazily into the silence; I reeled, belched, and then went on my way. When I reached my studio I sat down and wrote to Selma: "I don't care for you any longer. I never cared for you! It was nothing but sham feeling! Leave me to myself! Let us each go his own way!" All the world had cast off fetters, all the world was changed, and my life too must change!

I started up in sudden horror at this crazy idea and tore up the letter. Sullenly I got into bed.

Next day the hoardings were covered with the decrees of the new government. The city was quiet. Motor lorries full of armed men drove about, machine-guns were placed in front of the public

buildings, and military patrols were to be seen. The red flag waved even from the spires of the Church of Our Lady.

There were long queues at the bakers' shops. Everybody was buying bread with panic haste. People ran off, hugging the hot, steaming rolls, almost like thieves.

In the Parliament House the Workers' and Soldiers' Council was holding its first meeting under Eisner's guidance, and choosing the Provisional Government of the Free State of Bavaria. Prominent in the evening edition of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* was the report of the Kaiser's abdication and the Crown Prince's renunciation of the succession, printed in large type. Below I read: "The Chancellor: Max, Prince of Baden."

A rumour went round that the King of Bavaria had been taken prisoner at Leutstetten, and somebody said: "And he'll soon have a bullet through him!" A few hours later we learned that Ludwig III and his family had gone by motor to the castle of Wildenwart, and that he had abdicated.

An old man, reading the paper in the street, turned pale and wailed loudly: "Horrible! Horrible — we shall be annihilated!" He reeled, as if he were overcome with faintness.

"What is it?" asked the people standing round. He handed the paper to a younger man near him, who read the armistice terms aloud. Everybody was struck dumb and there was consternation in every face.

A workman whose face was pinched with hunger and who wore a ragged uniform suddenly cried: "That's vengeance for Brest-Litovsk." He passed on. Nobody said anything.

That Saturday the streets were astir with happy crowds, eager for news.

Bewilderment

THE DAYS SLIPPED PAST like fleeting moments. I had been to the hospital. Selma was very ill. She lay there, emaciated and pale as death, and her eyes wandered restlessly. Her breast rose and fell as she gasped for breath. All her fellow patients gazed on her as one who must die before long.

"There, I wrote several notes in the night, for I thought I was dying. At four o'clock this morning they wanted to take me to the room where they all go to die. Just read: it was horrible," she said, panting.

I glanced through the pencil notes. In one she had written: "Dear Oskar, don't be unhappy if I die. Marry the dark girl." I felt a sharp pang as I read her words. In another note she said: "All happiness is short-lived; see that the child grows up a free woman."

I pulled myself together and stared stupidly before me. Selma smiled and held my hand. "Nonsense," I said. "You will get better." There was a pause. I could think of nothing whatever to say. My mind was in a whirl.

"Nurse says the child is as sound as a bell. We are to take it away soon," Selma resumed.

I tore myself away from my wandering thoughts.

"Oh, yes, I must send her home. That will be best," I blurted out mechanically.

I went home and wrote a long letter to my sister, Theresa, announcing the child's arrival. I praised Selma and represented our marriage as a remarkable success. All the time I wrote I thought: it's all false, it's a lie, every word of it; but I would have no one

exulting over me. Their former warnings should not be justified. Any exaggeration rather than admit unhappiness, especially to my brothers and sisters. I shuddered as I thought of the future, but I posted the letter. Then I went to see the professor. I was burning to know what he would say about the revolution.

"What do you say now, sir?" I asked. "Nobody believed it was coming." He shrugged his shoulders and it almost seemed that he was a little embarrassed. We were walking in the bare, deserted English Garden.

"My dear fellow, perhaps I am too old," he said meditatively. "But it is quite a good thing that this eternal parliamentary chatter has come to an end at last. What have they done? Chattered — nothing but chatter. I see the point about the Councils — Something in the nature of occupational representation, I mean — It's better, no doubt, because it springs direct from the people — Only, I wonder whether the right men will come to the fore."

For the first time it seemed to me that this man, usually so sure of himself, was in doubt. Indeed I was secretly tempted to trot out my revolutionary phrases all at once. But I checked myself without knowing why. I said no more about recent events, but spoke cautiously, feeling my way: "I am making quite a new beginning, sir — I think you will disapprove of it all and won't understand — You see, I think I have been absolutely on the wrong track hitherto —" I wanted to talk to him about my failure in marriage; I longed to know what he would say, if I left Selma some day. But curiously enough I lacked courage to speak.

"Indeed. Well, what is going to happen?" he asked, half smiling.

"Oh — I really can't tell you anything," I said, evading his query, and he asked no further questions. I was vexed at my own cowardice.

At other times you're the most bloodthirsty of revolutionaries, I thought; this man is human like yourself, he eats like you, has the same physical needs as you, and some day he will die like you; then why this stupid fear of him? At times I hated him and yet feared him, I loved him and yet I was a stranger to him, an utter stranger. At each meeting I was firmly resolved to tell him my views plainly, and each time I deceived him and myself with some invention.

And all the time the good man was neither a fascinating personality nor a rabid partisan, who refuted all my ideas triumphantly. He believed that it was well worth while to respect intellectual liberty, and he did not give a thought to the rest of what I did or left undone. There were no conditions attached to the scholarship, indeed he disliked my thanking him for it. It was my poems, and they alone, which earned his sympathy.

Why, then, was I always like a hypocritical schoolboy in his presence? In effect, he was making me a present of money, and I had observed from my childhood upwards that people are only paid for real work. I could hardly understand acts of pure benevolence, and the few verses that I wrote were a somewhat questionable return. For surely no one feasts his neighbour for the pure pleasure of honouring him. I was wholly at a loss to account for it.

I was equally at sea in all my other affairs.

I had married and was bound to provide for my wife. Simply to run away was out of the question. To support one's wife was merely what was expected, everywhere. And yet in these few weeks I had fallen in love with the dark girl; without exaggeration, terribly in love. At times I was beside myself. I forgot everything. We walked together for hours every day and talked incessantly. When our conversation flagged my heart thumped. I turned giddy, and my mind was in a tumult. I touched my companion's arm and stroked her gently on the hips. I turned hot and cold alternately. I wanted to fall upon her like a boor and a brute, but kept myself firmly in hand. I thought of Selma with dull despair, and began hastily to talk again. In the midst of our conversation I often burst into a coarse laugh. My teeth chattered. "Are you cold?" asked the girl.

"No, no, I'm always like that. I have been living in such a rush lately," I fibbed.

I was no longer able to sleep. For whole nights I walked about the streets, racked my brains, and ended by going to prostitutes again. They revolted me, and yet I thought, anything to throw off this agitation. But it was not to be thrown off. One harlot was so fat that I ran away from her, shuddering with disgust. I reeled unsteadily along the street. The thought passed through my mind

that perhaps, after all, my place was the madhouse. I left the harlots. I plunged like a mad bull through the revolution, through days and nights. The confusion of my mind grew worse and worse. I went secretly into a church at times and tried to pray. Stupidly and childishly. That was no good, absolutely no good. It was horrible. I made a desperate effort to take some serious resolution, but immediately all my strength of mind crumbled away. I turned sulky and was at my wits' end.

Schorsch came and said: "I say, the police will give no more trouble. Let's go and fetch our papers and tell that spy, Fuchs, exactly what we think of him." So off we went.

Suddenly I exclaimed: "It's all rot! This doesn't matter a bit!" We loitered about in the stirring city. "This whole revolution is a poor affair," I grumbled. "For one single day they made a bit of a row, and now! What are they doing now? They're beginning again to put things to rights, and there's nothing left to put to rights!"

"Ass!" snapped my friend.

"Have *you* noticed any results of the revolution?" I asked bluntly.

"No, I haven't. But then it takes time," he replied.

"Nor have I. We're in the same muck as before," I growled. Suddenly I ran off, fetched the dark girl, and went with her to see Selma. We took the child and brought it to my people in Berg.

Life in the village went on unchanged. Everybody worked, the decrees, posted outside the parish hall, were blurred with rain, and nobody looked at them. Nobody here troubled about what was happening.

My mother greeted us with a laugh as we entered the low-roofed kitchen, my brother Maurus, who had returned from the front a few days earlier, was chopping wood in the yard, Theresa was sewing in the parlour. We had coffee, and they all gazed at the crying child.

"There! That's what comes of marrying, Sir Husband," scoffed Theresa. Mother asked after Selma.

"Is there much going on in the city?" asked Maurus indifferently.

I wanted to tell all about it. He smiled caustically: "The main

point is that the war is over. These fellows won't make things better."

"But we are in power now!" I boasted foolishly.

He looked at me malignantly and cried: "You? You'll make a fine job of it! Out here nobody cares a straw about it." And as I was silent he began again: "They're all fools! Not one of them knows anything about the land. And such simpletons! Every peasant has got his army rifle in the house now. Just wait and see what a row there'll be if they come here and want to give orders! Let them go on as they have begun!" He shook his head. "Such asses! Such crazy idiots!"

We took leave. Outside the village we walked across stubble-fields hard with frost. A startled hare ran down a furrow, ravens croaked in the air, the mail-coach drove along the road, and the children were running home from Aufkirchen, where I used to go to school.

"My God! this does me good," I said, stopping and taking a deep breath. "The city is horrible."

A gentle melancholy came over me.

"They make wars and revolutions there, and rush about and fight, get shot for monomanias, set up laws and prohibitions, and arrest people. And all round about, here in the country, everything jogs along in the old way: the peasants till the soil, the corn grows, winter and summer follow one another, people are born and die, and everything is peaceful and beautiful. What is the use of all this uproar!" I repeated, and turned to the girl. My brain became calm and clear. A sudden longing seized me. I wanted to take the girl in my arms. All at once, however, I said hastily: "But you know, if I were out here alone, I should die of boredom. It's a good thing there is always excitement. We must always have revolution!"

The girl smiled and said: "You don't know yourself what you want."

We walked on and I spoke more lightly. The journey to Munich was much too short for my liking.

The city was in a whirl again. Eisner had refused co-operation

with the Foreign Office in Berlin and threatened a separate peace. Thereupon a tremendous outcry arose in the north German press.

Pegu wrote to me. He had been liberated from the military prison by the revolutionaries on November 9th, and he was at the centre of the extremist movement in Berlin. There had been far more violent developments there. Street fighting went on. The outcome of this wild confusion was almost comical: after a long struggle the bitterest enemies, Majority Socialists and Independents, had taken over the provisional government, and had determined, after a conference with the Governments of the Federal States, to hold elections for a National Assembly. Every day the papers were full of muddled decrees, which people soon ceased to read.

"Calm and order! Peace! No bloodshed! No fratricide! No more war!" was the spirit of every proclamation. They were out and out pacifists, from Left to Right, but they neglected no opportunity of attacking one another, they sniped at one another as if they were at war. Each party preached reconciliation, but each strove resolutely for undivided power.

On the one side stood Ebert, Scheidemann, Landsberg, Barth, Haase, and Dittmann,¹ with the troops led by Wels and the officers of the old regime; on the other the Spartacus League² with Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Ledebour, and the masses. "Down with the National Assembly! No elections in the Federal States! All power to the Soviets!" was the watchword of thousands and tens of thousands of rebels. The Spartacus League had openly established its headquarters in Berlin, and in like manner the movement spread in every State and province and city.

In Munich, too, the new parties sorted themselves out and prepared for the elections. Here, too, the masses packed the public halls. One day they listened to Eisner and Toller, the next to the Majority Socialists, Auer, Schnepfenhorst, and Timm. But the Spartacists, Mühsam, Levien, and Leviné, won more and more sup-

¹ The six members of the first Socialist Government.

² The extreme Left opposition. *Translator's Notes.*

port. They called the people to an open fight against the Governments. They demanded the seizure of power by the proletariat. All the elements of discontent collected round them and thronged the streets. These refused to keep quiet, they did not want a peaceful life, they scurried hither and thither, waiting for all that they most urgently needed: food, shoes, clothing, house-room, and vengeance for the injustice they had suffered. There were whole families among them, father, mother, daughter, son, and schoolchild.

After a time the police turned up, or the Republican Guard, in motor lorries. Machine-guns were turned menacingly upon the wavering demonstrators, a shot was fired in the air, everybody ran and screamed, then surged forward again, and at the second shot ran screaming and cursing in all directions.

"Bloodhounds! Mass murderers! Traitors!" rang out on all sides. "Down with them! Down with them!" roared a thousand voices in all the streets. People slowly lost faith in Eisner and grew more embittered. The papers lied and incited to violence. The censorship had been abolished. Any story might be told. The wildest rumours found credence and intensified the agitation.

Once at night crowds rushed to take possession of all the printing presses. Mühsam made a speech in the courtyard of the *Münchner Tagblatt* about the immediate steps to be taken and how the Press should be socialized in this way. The former editors were deposed, and the revolutionaries wanted to set to work upon the new paper. The printers seemed to be won over, for they were promised a share in the net profits. But suddenly Eisner appeared on the scenes, and the Chief of Police, Staimer, with a company of the Security Guard. There was some risk of a massacre. Eisner vanished into the building, and when he returned it transpired that he had gone secretly to the printing works and sent the workers home. People stared at one another in consternation. Then the air was rent with cries of derision and curses. Eisner and Staimer departed, the Guard withdrew, the crowd dispersed angrily. Next day nothing appeared but a single tiny sheet, but after that the usual dailies came out. They went on lying, unabashed.

"There you are! That's Eisner's revolution!" I snarled when I met Schorsch. "That's the German Revolution! As soon as you mean to begin — our lords and masters come along with soldiers, and if you don't obey they shoot! Nice, that is!"

I cursed the whole concern, root and branch. I was unhappy and morose. This Munich revolution was a delight to its opponents. It was dull, it was harmless, it was intolerable. It was a joke, and a bad one at that. True, the king had been deposed. On all sides shops were busy removing their coats of arms as purveyors to the royal family. People talked big at meetings, and then they marched through the streets, shouting and waving flags, like a noisy veterans' club. "Down with this!" and "Long live that!" they shouted, hardly knowing why. The rich continued to live in luxury and enjoy themselves, they were well provided with hoarded supplies; they frequented high-class hotels and restaurants, and nobody touched a hair of their heads. The hoardings were covered with menacing decrees against illicit trade, but those at whom they were aimed laughed them to scorn. The upper classes were already grumbling again, the counter revolutionary parties were brazen in their incitements, the papers mocked at Eisner, the students hatched plots, and the workers were arrested or shot when they put forward demands.

And now the intellectuals and the artists made a move. The "Artists' Council" held a great meeting in the German Theatre. They were to discuss the reform of the Academy and of the Technical School, and the re-organization of art teaching. Eisner came and spoke brilliantly for a whole hour. But no sooner had he finished than all was in confusion. People abused one another and each one was prevented by the rest from speaking. One man's right to call himself an artist was denied, another was invited to attend church festivals. A general tumult of mutual abuse arose. Everyone shouted and gesticulated and addressed those around him. It was very comical. At last the painter, Stanislaus Stückgold, made himself heard, and, in spite of the ferocious threats hissed at him, he mounted the stage, placed a chair on the speakers' table, lay back comfortably

in it, and rocked slowly to and fro as he spoke, up and down, so that Eisner, who was holding one leg of the chair, see-sawed up in the air.

"You're not a painter! You can't even hold a brush!" somebody shouted.

"Mere decorative prettiness!" yelled a red-bearded fellow in a corner, and shook his fist.

"Decorative?!" Stückgold shouted them all down at last. "Yes, that's very true! I'm a decorative painter! What's wrong with that, gentlemen? What's all the fuss about? What is an artist? — A worker!" He pointed to his forehead and then to his stomach: "Them's brains, and that's the stomach — that's an artist! a worker!" He was howled down by wild yells, which rose to a tumult, a very tempest of shouts. At last the meeting dispersed.

There was a conference at the house of the Minister of Finance for the time being, Jaffé. A "Council of Brain-Workers" was to be set up. I went. They discussed educative propaganda in the press, school reforms, and the right of the intellectuals to take a share in deciding other cultural questions.

Katzenstein, with his thin face, was running about and making himself important, and there was Karl Wolfskehl; Rilke was leaning modestly against the wall in a corner; I saw the lyric poet, Wolfenstein, in his black horn spectacles. They were all elegant, cultured people here; you could tell at a glance that they had never had anything to do with the people. I was angry again. A stumpy man in parson's clothes, with a broad face, a red beard, and a wrinkled forehead, stepped forward. He coughed nervously and seemed overburdened with things to say. He regarded the audience very critically.

"Leaflets must be written and distributed to enlighten and calm the people," said Katzenstein.

"It is absolutely necessary to calm the masses," repeated a literary man in mincing tones. The masses, so they said, were undisciplined, the country people goaded to violence, the city was in danger of starvation. At the words "country people" I started up

and shouted boorishly a few meaningless phrases at the horrified meeting.

"Nobody in the country cares a straw about the revolution! And if one of you gentlemen here went out to them, they'd make game of him!" I bellowed maliciously, and then I grew confused. "The first thing to do is to stand up against the reactionaries in the city. The Republican Guard is merely a students' army, incited against the workers. That's no good! There's not a single worker now who understands what is intended, because you all talk so intellectually!"

Most of the audience stood up and tried to argue with me. Only the man with the beard looked at me with an expression of satisfaction.

"For Heaven's sake, Graf, we mustn't make provocative speeches or there'll be a massacre!" said Katzenstein and Wolfenstein hurriedly. "Incendiary speeches like that are most dangerous!" They all tried to pacify me.

"It's true all the same! It's all chatter; it's no such thing as a revolution!" I snarled, simply because I disliked these people. "A pack of scribblers!"

"Hans Ludwig Held!" cried the chairman, and the stumpy man rose and made a powerful speech against intellectualism.

"The last speaker is right!" he cried. "It is true what he said about the country people. You, gentlemen, had better not show your faces in the country!" There were indignant protests at various points.

"It depends on us, gentlemen! Revolution is not a product of the brain, it must grow out of the whole man!" he continued, and described the new era in imaginative terms; then he turned to religion and quoted the mystics sonorously. I crept away unnoticed. At home I found a letter from Pegu. He, too, used the phrase: "It depends on the human material!"

I could not bear my solitude. I wanted to go and see the dark girl, but it was very late. I went to the Dutchman's and drank a great deal, so that the whole roomful of guests stared at me in amazement.

These drinking-bouts always took the same course: at first we sat comfortably together and became more and more cheerful; then we grew boisterous, and at a particular point we became unreasonably irritable. Not infrequently it all ended in wild quarrels and abuse.

Marietta leapt up on some insignificant provocation and gave the Dutchman a resounding box on the ear; there was an uproar, the couple fought, and then Marietta began to smash everything, and finally ran off with two artists. The Dutchman and I remained behind alone. For a time we sat face to face in the smoking-room without speaking. The wealthy man was deeply depressed; he kept on twitching and twisting the thin hair on his temples, and made a wry face of vexation from time to time. I was not drunk, and I had a strong feeling that the fellow wanted to talk to me. But what did it all matter to me? I wanted to go. He held me back.

I sat down again.

"Hm, it's all very absurd," I murmured indifferently. He said nothing.

"You are a rich man, I am a peasant and a worker. There is an immense gulf between us. As a matter of fact, we are enemies, and yet, all at once—we're on a level. You're in a mess, and I'm in a mess," I said meditatively.

"It's all rubbish about rich men and workers! Oh dear, oh dear!" retorted the Dutchman.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter," I said, and added parenthetically with regard to Marietta: "But she'll soon come. You wait and see, she'll come in, and to divert your attention she'll tell some highwayman's tale." I regretted my frankness, but the Dutchman made no answer, and I was glad. Next month, the professor had told me, a returned student was to have my scholarship, and I should have to go on with my illicit trading. Business was not flourishing. Moreover, Selma was due to return from the hospital in eight or ten days. So once more I was like a dog that has got to knuckle under: to knuckle under and make my way through repellent necessities with a maximum of agility. Again I saw approaching the utter desolation

of want. I should have liked to spend every day and every night with the Dutchman like this, drinking, always drinking, and thinking of nothing at all. So it is easy to understand why I was glad.

Suddenly the bell rang and Marietta actually did come. She did in fact tell how somebody at the corner had fired a shot. We two men exchanged a hasty and meaning glance. I rose. The Dutchman accompanied me to the door, pressed my hand, and said: "Come again soon." I nodded and went.

Every afternoon I went to the hospital, and at last one day Selma said: "Tomorrow I am coming out."

I hurried home, got in food, tidied the studio, and put clean sheets on Selma's bed, working away excitedly. From time to time I stopped and reflected, and said, just as if everything were as it should be: "Oh, yes. Hm. That must do."

Early in the morning I got up and went to Schorsch; I borrowed money and bought some flowers, and put one nosegay in the bedroom and another on the table in the studio. I went to the hospital and fetched Selma. We hardly spoke on the way home. She noticed that I was upset.

When we reached home I told her that I could no longer stay with her. There followed a terrible, indescribable scene. Now tears, now entreaties, now hatred. For whole nights and days she sobbed and screamed. I was paralysed with pity and aversion, and for the most part I kept away.

I went to a house agent and heard of a studio at last. The present tenant had come about it only a couple of hours earlier. When I turned up she was startled.

"The studio is mine now," I said curtly in reply to all her objections.

"Yes, but I have a good deal of wood and coal here," she protested.

"Wood and coal belong to the place, not the person. I have worked at the Coal Distribution Office myself, and I know the law," I said with the air of an expert.

"Very well, then you can move in tomorrow; in the afternoon, please," the sculptress literally besought me. "And I must leave

the wood and coal behind. I only hope I shall get as much again in my new room."

"Oh, yes, you're sure to," I said, and finally we agreed that I might bring my furniture that same day. For a time I wandered irresolutely about the city; finally I borrowed a hand-cart from the coal merchant.

Selma sat on the sofa in a state of collapse, staring almost like a madwoman. I talked to her for a long time, and very gently, and she grew calmer and more composed. I carried a table, a chair, my typewriter, my clothes and books and the sofa down into the street, piled them all onto the cart, and when I reached the new studio the sculptress had cleared away her things. A note was pinned to the wall: "I have cleared out at once, and wish you good luck."

I sat down on the chair and let myself go. The parting had been a considerable strain. I was weary and irritable. I left everything where I had put it in haste, returned the cart, and went into the city. I did not want to see any of my acquaintances. I was driven up this street and down the next by restless depression. I wanted to go to the Parliament House, but the sentry would not let me in. By chance I met a workman, an extremist whose acquaintance I had lately made. I walked with him for a bit and argued.

"This revolution is worse than the monarchy," I said. He agreed.

"But just give us time, we shall soon be in power — We need arms first," he said.

"What; but you're a pacifist?! " I queried.

"Oh, yes, that's true — But we only want a proletarian struggle of self-defence against the counter-revolution — a man can't be a pacifist there," he retorted.

"Really — indeed, I always thought pacifism meant the repudiation of all war and all use of force. So the militarists were really in the right," I answered.

He stared at me and did not know what to say next.

"Oh, well, once the power is in our hands there won't be any more wars," he resumed after a pause, and asked: "Or what do you say about it?"

"The general strike! Simply a general strike on thoroughly radical lines. The well-to-do and the middle classes have not begun to feel the pinch of the revolution yet. When there's no water, no light, no bread, nothing at all, then there'll be an end of the counter-revolution. We need not shoot: all we need to do is to refuse to lift a finger," I answered morosely.

"Yes, yes, that's quite right, quite right, but nobody will play up," he said. "That sort of thing depends on everybody joining, else it is useless. The Majority Socialists will leave us in the lurch, whatever we attempt. So it's better to look about for arms."

"And if you shoot, will everybody join?" I asked, at once spiteful and sad.

"Oh, yes, they're sure to."

"Then we are all lost — the revolution — and all of us," I answered, and left him.

A Fool Steps In

THE SAYING THAT A FOOL is generally lucky seemed to hold good in my case. As time went on I had become known in the most varied circles. Almost every revolutionary knew me, at least by name, the poets and artists of Schwabing envied me for my friendship with the rich Dutchman, other aesthetic circles had heard of me, a good deal of my work had appeared in journals and magazines, and a few weeks earlier a volume of my poems had come out; the professor eagerly enlisted interest in my work on all sides, so did the Red Cross man and the dark girl. Moreover, at that time there was a curious wave of enthusiasm among the well-to-do with artistic and literary tastes for men of talent sprung from the people. It was no uncommon thing for a salon to have a so-called "show proletarian." It is difficult to see why; whether from unacknowledged fear or misdirected cunning.

Gradually I made my studio more comfortable. The Dutchman gave me several pieces of furniture and oriental hangings, and I was his daily guest. For the time being there was no prospect of procuring money, so I schooled myself to play the part of the kept hanger-on of the rich man. There can be no doubt that I developed great skill in this rôle, for I was soon the most popular person in that stormy household. With well-feigned simplicity which never failed in its effect, with convincing insensibility, I dealt with the frequent moods of irritation which preceded a quarrel and a storm; often I dissipated them with a few words. "Oh, yes, let's have another storm! Go ahead, make a good row! There's not nearly enough going on in the world!" I generally said on such occasions

to Marietta and the Dutchman, and, whether they would or no, they began to laugh. Good humour was restored. This made me more and more of a favourite. And I nursed certain faint hopes which may easily be guessed.

I had luck, moreover, in other directions. A short time before this I had been invited to the house of a lady to whom the professor had recommended me warmly. She was well known as a patroness of young poets and artists, was said to be very rich, lived alone with one servant in a remarkably large house furnished in exquisite taste, and had a kind of literary salon. She felt something in the nature of human sympathy with the revolution, though everything about it was alien to her. She had a decided taste for modern painting and possessed some very choice recent pictures. Besides this she wrote poetry and had already published several books.

We got on well together and I was often welcomed. The lady took an interest in my private affairs and showed the liveliest sympathy about everything. She seemed to know a great deal about my unhappy condition, and she soon gave me a monthly allowance of two hundred marks. I was now in a position to provide for Selma and the child.

It was strange, I was not shy of this patroness, and in many respects I was quite frank with her. That brought us together. One day she even took charge of the child, until my mother fetched it to keep permanently in the country.

I was now freer in my movements. I wrote poetry and moved in revolutionary circles. Something must happen; much more! I fairly panted for it.

"Jung has written. It's coming in Berlin! Liebknecht won't go on with the fraud," said Schorsch to me one day. "There'll be Spartacist fights."

"Oh, rot," I growled, and began again about my idea of a general strike: "A general strike, carried on till the capitalists and all the counter-revolutionaries knuckle under. Then we must make an entirely fresh start. The terror is nonsense."

"That's terror too, you idiot!" bawled Schorsch.

"Yes, but without bloodshed," I answered.

It was queer, hitherto I had gone everywhere as an onlooker; I was on the spot, but as an outsider; now I suddenly wanted to play my part. I had never thought out any proper policy, but was all the more agog, day in day out, with certain stereotyped ideas.

I wrote high-flown manifestos and wanted to publish them as an "individual program." The Council of Brain-Workers had been established. There was a meeting in Baron Bernus's house, where Paul Ernst, who had been elected to the Committee, made a speech. Inside people sat and listened to his address, outside in a darkened hall a few were walking about and discussing all manner of subjects. Katzenstein asked me if I could write leaflets. I agreed and wanted to know what there was to be written. "All right, I'll speak of it again," said Katzenstein, and the next moment he was talking to somebody else. He flitted about, and there was need. A few days later I received a letter from the publishing firm, Georg Müller, asking me to come and take over the editorship of a journal that was to be started. I swelled with pride. There, I said to myself, see how famous you are; and I went to see them. I was received by a certain Mr. Neuhöfer, and a Baron von Gemmingen. The former did the talking. He wanted the interests of southern Germany defended; Prussianism must be sharply attacked. Kurt Eisner, it seemed, had done the right thing when he refused to coöperate with the central Government.

"A sort of catastrophic journal, then?" I asked.

"No, no; politically serious, but incisive, don't you see, incisive! Nothing dull," said Mr. Neuhöfer.

"Then buy up *Simplicissimus* . . . It's in a bad way," I said. "Buy it and make it the direct opposite of its former self. It has been glorifying the war all this time, and when we get it, it would suddenly have to make a complete turn to the right-about. It would have to be pacifist, Spartacist, Bavarian, and everything that we want. That would be a good joke."

The gentleman seemed to have obtained sufficient evidence of my incompetence, and said I should hear later. I took leave.

But this affair put an idea into my head. I went to the Dutchman. We drank manfully, and in the course of the conversation I said: "I'll tell you what. There ought to be a new journal, extremist and satirical, which would make such game of everything that the revolutionary bigwigs would be obliged to have a real revolution at last. The present moment, this idiotic shilly-shallying, would give a paper like that its material ready-made. It would have to be something like a new *Simplicissimus*. Do you see what I mean?"

"All right," said the Dutchman directly, greatly to my surprise, "all right. It's not a bad idea. I've got a bookseller in Frankfort, a good friend of mine. He can tell us what he thinks. Let's go to Frankfort tomorrow, and if it's a workable scheme, I will put down the money directly."

I was speechless with astonishment for a moment; then I agreed.

"You'll do nothing but tipple," said Marietta ironically, but we adhered to our plan.

I went home and passed a sleepless night, packing my few clothes in my worn portmanteau, and the next day we went to Frankfort. We put up at the Frankfurter Hof, where I had one luxurious room and the Dutchman another, with a bath between. I was fairly intoxicated at such a rise in the world. I was already picturing myself as an all-powerful editor in a palatial office. It was like a dream. I wore a shabby green suit and patent leather shoes which pinched horribly. The Dutchman, as usual, was dressed in the latest fashion.

I should sit at my writing-table, smoking fat cigars, with an incredible number of bells at hand; sub-editors, poets, reporters, lift-boys, and servants would fly to carry out my instructions; I should be feared by the authorities and beloved by the people — it was all beyond the scope of imagination. I lay down, as the Dutchman had advised, to rest a little. I brushed my suit again and again, polished my patent leather shoes with a cloth, combed my hair, and waited in readiness. That evening we were to sup with acquaintances and then discuss the matter over choice wines. The Dutchman knocked. I sprang to the door.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, we can go now," I cried, and we went down to the gorgeous, brightly lighted dining-room. I summoned every ounce of self-assurance that I possessed, ignored the torture of my tight shoes, and assumed a tone of brazen flippancy; nevertheless, I was not unaware of the condescension with which every waiter regarded me.

The table at which we took our seats was laid for several people. There were no end of plates, large and small, and neatly laid beside them was a whole gamut of spoons and forks and knives in all sizes. Though dining with the Dutchman had accustomed me to a great deal, I was totally at a loss to make out what all this rummage was for. I was wholly occupied in puzzling over it. I could not make head or tail of it. However, I reflected, to keep one's eyes open is the whole battle.

"It's fine here," I murmured casually, "really magnificent."

The Dutchman did not hear. He was carefully studying the wine list. Now and again he murmured the name of some wine in a voice of contentment: "Hm-m, hm, Deidesheim Hassert, fourteen, . . . Hm — hm. Oh, look! Schierstein Hell, grown at Groroder Hof . . . M — hm — hm, Wachenheim Reisling, 1915 . . . hm — hm . . . excellent, excellent!"

Then the guests arrived. There was the bookseller, Tiedemann, with a fine blonde, the tall, black-haired, noisy artist Starcke, and his wife, and the painter Rudolph Lewy, with his red face, a man whom nothing put out of countenance. The Dutchman introduced me ironically. Wine was ordered and reverently tasted, then approved. The waiter brought a marvellous hors d'oeuvre, with oysters in it. Unobserved I cast a hasty glance round the table to see how they were eaten, then seized the shell-fish and gulped down the cold slime just like the others. I felt sick at each gulp, but I forced myself to swallow.

Dinner was brought. We drank and grew livelier. I laughed, and the perspiration broke out on my face. I wiped it with my table-napkin. They all looked at me with curious smiles.

After we had eaten our fill the waiter brought crystal bowls of water, which puzzled me greatly. I hesitated and waited cautiously

to see what was coming. What fools, I thought, they're going to drink water after all this; and I was already seizing my bowl, when I saw the Dutchman dipping his fingers in the water and wiping them on his napkin. I hastened to follow his example. It all went off without a disaster. I breathed freely again.

Jovial, well-fed, stirred to new achievements, we rose and went to the bar. Starcke told endless stories about Sternheim, we laughed, Lewy cracked jokes, and at last the Dutchman broached the subject of the paper to his friend, Tiedemann.

"Ah, hm," murmured Tiedemann, and cast a sidelong glance at me. I tried to set forth an impressive program, but it faded away in a comical hesitation and lack of self-assurance. Nobody was interested. We went on drinking long after closing time. Finally we were all lying in the darkened reception hall of the hotel, talking in thick, tipsy voices.

"Lord, I'm soaked!" growled Tiedemann every now and then, and his head fell on his breast. I went on swallowing the oily whisky incessantly, ill-humoured and dejected, and cursed the whole company. So Marietta had been right. What was I here for?

Next day we took a walk in the town, and when we returned to the hotel the waiter gave me a telegram from Berlin:

"Come at once. It's beginning here. Important!" was Schorsch's information. I was at once confounded and delighted. I borrowed money from the Dutchman and set off directly for Berlin.

Pegu met me at the Anhalt station. We literally fell into one another's arms.

"What's happening?" I asked, and showed him the telegram. He smiled.

"Oh, nothing at all!" he murmured.

I began to swear horribly, so that people turned and stared at us. We went to see Jung. Berlin, in point of fact, looked just as usual. The trams were running, and the people hurrying about their business; only here and there one saw motor lorries with armed soldiers, and, indeed, barbed wire in front of certain houses. Jung told us of Liebknecht's meetings, and said there would be an outbreak within a

few days. We sat in the studio, the gramophone played, we argued about articles in the *Rote Fahne*,¹ and drank brandy. That evening we went to a Syndicalist meeting. Some spoke in favour of co-operation with Liebknecht, others against. Somebody dashed into the hall and announced that there had been a pogrom a few houses down the street. A Jew had been treacherously shot. And we really did hear the crack of several shots. The audience became very restless. I ascended the platform and said something about a general strike and human rights. A few of my listeners assented, but the hall was already emptying. Outside in the darkness people stood in groups. The usual rumours were whispered from ear to ear. "Down with Ebert-Scheidemann!" shouted one or another. Then strong military patrols came and dispersed the people.

The next day there was to be a tremendous demonstration of the Spartacists. Schorsch spoke of the secret enlistment of armed bands. Mobs gathered here and there in the streets, with speakers in their midst advocating the dictatorship of the proletariat and calling upon the men to go with them to the League of Combatants; they were like merchants calling their wares. Most of the people cracked jokes, listened half-heartedly, and went away, while others took their places. That evening we went to a meeting where Liebknecht was to speak. But there was such an immense crowd that we were turned away on the outer steps.

"What is it all about?" I asked of a Spartacist.

"War to the knife! The dictatorship may be proclaimed any day now!" he said.

"And then?" I asked.

"Liebknecht and Rosa will see to that," answered the man.

I went with Pegu in a mood of vexation.

"It's all rubbish! Always shooting! They ought to manage it quite differently, and that at once!" I said to Pegu.

"Hm," he murmured.

I went back to Munich. A few days after my return I went to my patroness and unfolded an ambitious scheme. Something must

¹ Spartacist newspaper. *Translator's Note.*

be done to check the terrorist idea, was my somewhat meagre notion: something that would finally unite the whole people in a republican community. Statesmen could do nothing until there was peace between all classes, and there was the ultimate danger of massacre, too horrible for words.

"And — what do you want to do?" asked the lady.

"It's very simple!" I said. "I will summon a great meeting and speak to that effect. Then influence must be brought to bear on all the intellectuals to work in the same direction, especially on the University professors. We must get all classes to accept the new era wholeheartedly, and then we can make progress. But first it is absolutely essential to hold a meeting and form a kind of League of the Free. I shall need money for that."

The lady saw my point.

She did not hesitate, but gave me two thousand marks to carry out my project. This completely bewildered me. I suddenly found myself committed to an undertaking and was absolutely bound to do something. I wrote leaflets and had them printed: ten thousand of each straightway. I went to a printer and had an enormous poster set up with the following words:

"To all Classes! Great public meeting! Against the Terror! For Humanity! Speaker: Oskar Maria Graf, Munich.

"Men and women! Workers, soldiers, citizens, artists, scholars, students! Members of all parties! Men of all classes! For four years men have been slaughtered senselessly. For four years the reign of force stifled reason and humanity!

"After four years of horror, bloodshed, and death, the Revolution has been victorious and has given us peace, opening the road to a new life.

"Whilst the Governments are concerned to restore order and peace, whilst each one of us goes about his work, agitators and mischief-makers are causing trouble, stirring up strife, and seeking to incite the people to fresh acts of violence, armed risings, etc.

"After four years of slaughter, shall there still be no end?

"Let the people gather together! Let them say: No! Let each and every one come who has not forgotten his humanity!

"We do not want to establish a party, which represents nothing but its own interests; those who summon you have the welfare of the people in view.

"The Fellowship for establishing the League of the Free."

Next day the placards were posted up. I went stealthily and stood before the hoardings, gazing at them with immense admiration. I tingled with the joy of satisfied vanity. My name had never been printed so large before. I wired to Pegu. He came the next day.

"A new organization! League of the Free! There's money! It's all going splendidly!" I said. He read the posters open-mouthed and round-eyed.

"My dear fellow, you're the complete counter-revolutionary!" he exclaimed.

"On the contrary! We need anarchist propaganda again now! Only the individual — until we have the right kind of individuals, no revolution can succeed!" I explained. He shook his head again and again.

I was living in a whirlwind. I got several students of my acquaintance to distribute the leaflets. The dark girl, Pegu, and I put them in every letter-box also. The meeting was sure to be packed. I was petulantly self-important.

The day of the meeting came nearer and nearer.

"Have you prepared your speech?" asked the lady.

"Oh, yes, of course," I answered. I had not thought out a single word.

The dark girl and Pegu asked the same question. I simply rushed about. Words would come to me, I thought, the great thing was to have a full hall.

The two thousand marks melted into nothing. I was secretly very much alarmed at my own precipitate action. And then the great occasion came. The whole Mathes Hall was so packed that it was hardly possible to press through the crowd, and outside half the garden was thronged.

I ascended the platform. A student was in the chair. He rang his bell and spoke a few words. Then it was my turn. The dark girl sat on my right and took shorthand notes.

"Ladies and gentlemen! Friends! Rebels! Citizens!" I began at the top of my voice, and paused to think. Hardly anything occurred to me. The people were lolling at the tables.

"I have called you to this meeting to raise my voice against the terror! Terror is war! None of us desires war and massacre! I have been in Berlin and have heard Liebknecht speak, and witnessed pogrom mobs! There is confusion on all sides, nothing but confusion!" I was put off by interruptions. I had no idea how to continue, and was thankful for the tumult. The chairman could not go on ringing his bell too long to please me.

"Knock him down!" cried some, and further back a workman shouted such violent threats that there was something of a scuffle. On the right the Communists were yelling at me.

I shouted at the top of my voice: "I am opposed to all terror! Be its origin what it may!" The storm grew wilder, and in the end Joseph Sontheimer, the former founder of the free-thinkers' movement who was now an extreme Spartacist, stood on the platform and took control of the meeting.

"We know him! He's a harmless Tolstoian, and very muddle-headed!" he began, and as there was nothing else to be done I suddenly exclaimed:

"That's the end. The meeting is closed!" The chairman did likewise. And now things looked ugly. I just stood still, staring stupidly at the tumult, and let Sontheimer speak. The discussion was utterly confused, and when at last the meeting dispersed there were cries on all sides: "The dirty dog stirs up half Munich to come and hasn't a word to say! He wants a thrashing!"

We escaped in a state of stupefaction from the crowd and hurried back to Schwabing. Next day all the papers were indignant at such a dirty trick. Only one question troubled me: how will you make it up with the lady? The money is nearly all used up, and nothing has come of it. I should have to present an account, I reflected, though she had not asked for anything of the kind.

So I hastily started a "League of the Free." Schorsch, Pegu, myself, the dark girl, one other women student, one workman — that was all. I went to the lady, played the rôle of a man undismayed by failure, and announced to her that she was an honorary member of the League. She was not at all angry, but she took no interest in our organization; nevertheless she agreed rather half-heartedly to it all. I announced that she would soon receive an account of our expenditure and a report of our activities. She protested against this without the slightest sign of mistrust, and I left her with a sigh of relief.

"We must draw up a program," I said to Pegu. We sat down and thought it over. Our principal aim was to establish settlements on a purely Socialist basis. "The establishment of settlements by the purchase of mismanaged farms, which shall be cultivated in common and the produce enjoyed in common." So the clause ran.

From time to time we met in my studio, but we did not know what for. I grew uncomfortable as time went on and I realized that we had no genuine "activities" to display before our patroness. At last one day Pegu brought two Free Germans who had turned Socialist extremists, and who wanted to join a settlement — Koch and Kurella by name. I saw at once that they were in earnest, and that suited me. They, for their part, supposed that we had any amount of money, or rather that we were in touch with those who would raise it. They unfolded their plans to us.

"Good," I said, "that is excellent. We can procure money. We regard it as our chief task to give practical support to every Socialistic scheme. Our League unites all phases of the movement, so to speak." Then I mentioned the lady, and shortly afterwards the pair received a considerable sum from her and others. They actually bought a large estate in Blankenburg, settled on it with several students and women handicraft workers, and set to work on purely Socialistic lines. Unluckily, however, none of them knew anything at all about agriculture, the settlement became a place of refuge for persecuted revolutionaries, and finally it had to be abandoned. I never saw it and took no further interest in it.

At my request the lady had offered a home to the woman student shortly before this. She was allowed a room rent-free, and reported all manner of things that were not meant to go beyond ourselves. The lady grew suspicious and asked me to come and see her. She was ill, and received me in her bedroom. The question of how the money had been spent was raised, in a manner most distressing to me. I saw, also, that she was by no means satisfied with my dubious attitude towards herself. Her frank questions pushed me into an awkward corner, and I made admissions, more and more admissions; I confessed that I had frivolously wasted the two thousand marks entrusted to me on myself and my companions, and finally I said: "Do you know, I am always like that, I hate everybody that has wealth and money! I hate the money too! We are really enemies — I can't get the better of myself!"

The lady thought that I was very candid, and she was satisfied. Her allowance continued. I went home and reflected on my past career: the journal had come to nothing, the meeting was a fiasco, the "League of the Free" was revolting nonsense.

I vowed to start no new enterprise, and began to write poetry again. I wanted to show what I was good for and invited a number of people to a poetry reading in my studio. Rilke, the Dutchman with Marietta, Karl Wolfskehl, the lady and a friend of hers, and a crowd of elegant people came. But the stove smoked so horribly that after a short time the guests took flight. I was distressed, and thought that at last I really would withdraw. I lost confidence in myself and hated the mere idea of a fresh resolve. "Oh, you fool! Idiot! Idiot!" I cried, grinding my teeth, on such occasions.

My drinking bouts with the Dutchman were resumed, and once more I played the kept hanger-on. He had a villa built in Nymphenburg. This was nearly finished and he meant to move into it in a few weeks. Bother, I thought, bother, you'll have nowhere comfortable to go nearby.

21

Tempest on all Sides

CHRISTMAS WAS NEAR. By this time pretty well all the soldiers were back from the front, and there were ceremonies in honour of their return. These were strange affairs: as a rule somebody spoke, praising the heroic deeds of our unconquered troops and embellishing his address with patriotic phrases; then followed another speaker who greeted the men in field-grey as soldiers of the revolution. Gustav Landauer spoke in the National Theatre and addressed the soldiers in these words: "You, who for four years were compelled to sacrifice your lives in a senseless slaughter of the peoples! The hour of freedom has struck — now fight for yourselves!"

Thousands thronged the streets all day; they had no work, they waited, grumbled, and did not know what to do or where to go.

Germany was convulsed. Disturbances had broken out in the Ruhr. I met workmen in the town who laughed at me when they saw me in the distance. "Hullo, there's Simple-Simon, the softy of the Mathes!" they scoffed, and then they told how their works were shut down for ten days because no coal could be obtained.

"And we get our wages in full, because the Government decrees it," they said, beaming with delight. "There's time for politics now."

The electoral struggle for the State and National Assemblies had begun. All the leaders of the parliamentary parties were making their election speeches. Stormy meetings followed on one another's heels. Leaflets were scattered in the streets, glaring posters shouted from walls and hoardings. The Spartacists carried

on their opposition movement with stubborn energy, made fanatical declarations in favour of refusing to vote, and held demonstrations.

The whole country was in a ferment.

In Berlin the Government troops had fired on the so-called People's Marines, and this had given the signal for great Spartacist riots. Once again the newspaper offices were occupied, vast demonstrations marched through every town in support of the Marines and against the Government of the people's delegates, and after a brief crisis the three Independent Socialists, Barth, Haase, and Dittmann, resigned their portfolios. Noske, Wissell, and Löbe joined Ebert, Scheidemann, and Landsberg.

Conspiracies were the order of the day in Munich. More and more fugitive Spartacists arrived from Berlin, appeared before the masses with Mühsam, Levien, and Leviné, and shouted their curses in the packed, suffocating halls. A proclamation, signed by nearly all those who were in the Bavarian Ministry at the time, called for the formation of a "Citizens' Guard." Eisner's name had been appended without his permission. There was a tremendous uproar in the Provisional Assembly, but the Guard was established almost overnight. All the enemies of the Republic and the revolution gathered in its ranks, especially students and unemployed officers. The Majority Socialist leaders, Auer and Timm, proved to be its chief promoters. An unknown man fired five shots in the dark at Mühsam on Boxing Day. The first anti-Semitic leaflets made their appearance. They were chiefly to be seen in small dairies and greengrocers' shops, or were pasted on the walls by stealth. Penny dreadful legends were spread abroad about Eisner's origin and his supposed wealth.

At the beginning of January we heard of the risings in Bremen. The leader was Jacob Knief, a man of great energy, real courage, and wide knowledge, who had been arrested at the same time as ourselves in January, 1918, in Munich. In Berlin an open struggle was raging. Gruesome reports reached us: of cannon thundering in the streets, flame-throwers in action, machine-guns firing. Noske¹ had proclaimed a state of siege, had deposed Eichhorn, the Chief of

¹ Minister of Defence in the Berlin Government. *Translator's note.*

Police, re-captured the newspaper offices, arrested Ledebour and Meyer, and issued warrants for the arrest of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, offering rewards for their apprehension.

And now Munich blazed up. "Down with the bloodthirsty Government of Ebert and Scheidemann and Noske!" Day by day the air was rent with such howls. Ernst Toller sent a telegram to the Berlin Government: "Scheidemann, Ebert, Noske, Members of the Government, Berlin— You must confess that for many days you have borne the guilt of every drop of blood yet to be shed. Though the German people has not called even Ludendorff to account, it will summon you before a People's Court, and there will not be a single German worker, conscious of his responsibility, but will declare you thrice guilty. We have long known that you are no Socialists. But now we are no longer sure if you were born of women."

The processions which thronged the streets grew wilder and fiercer. One day I was crossing Lenbach Square and saw a packed crowd of people wheeling at a rapid pace into Promenade Square amidst shouts and uproar.

"What's this?" I asked as I joined them.

"Eisner has had Mühsam, Levien, and ten other comrades sent to Stadelheim," I was told. We were already in front of the Ministry. The crowd surged to and fro. It was said that guards with loaded machine-guns stood behind the locked gate. The position was discussed for a few minutes. Suddenly a sailor swarmed up the lamp-post onto the balcony, vaulted over it, and disappeared through the door, whilst the people outside shouted applause. Shortly afterwards he appeared with Eisner, who was desperately excited and yelled down to us: "Fetch them, then, for the Lord's sake! They have been released!" He protested vehemently against this dictatorial pressure from the mob and pointed a menacing fore-finger at us, like an infuriated schoolmaster. If he had not sworn to prevent the state of affairs in Berlin from spreading to Munich, he would have resorted to stronger measures, and next time he would shoot, so he declared. Toller stood behind him, pale and distraught, and made

restless motions with his arms. A deafening roar of abuse was raised, a motor-lorry thundered past, we retreated with rapid steps. I went as far as Marie Square, the crowd marched on to Stadelheim and fetched the prisoners away. I met Schorsch. He had turned off into Promenade Street and was going home. There had been sudden firing from the Mortgage and Credit Bank. It was a volley from machine-guns. No one knew anything further. A workman came running towards us, greatly agitated.

"The garrisons at the barracks have been re-enforced and are in readiness! Machine-guns have been placed at the railway station," he told us hurriedly. "We don't know where we are! It's just as if Eisner were a counter-revolutionary too —"

It was evening when we reached Stachus. Hundreds of people were running along Prielmayr Street and Schützen Street towards the station. A sudden volley rang out from that direction, and the running people started back screaming; in a moment the whole square was thronged with people, all talking excitedly, scolding, shouting, and wailing. The guards had shot into the crowd; six dead and fifteen wounded were left lying on the ground.

"At them! Don't turn tail! Storm the station!" cried a sailor and checked the backward surge. But motor-lorries carrying soldiers were already clattering through the Karl Gate from Promenade Square.

I saw a sea of upturned faces struck helpless with amazement, and then the mob fled in disorder. Not till they reached Sendlinger Square did a procession form itself again and march down Müller Street. I had lost Schorsch and ran hither and thither, arriving dead tired at my studio at last. Next day about midday Schorsch came and told me the result of the Bavarian elections.

"There's to be a coup to-day. They're going to storm the Parliament House," he said.

"Fifty-two Majority Socialists, 38 Democrats, 31 Centre, and only 4 Independent Socialists,²" I read in the paper and added

² The Majority Socialists were the Right wing, who had voted war credits (though they had consistently pressed for peace negotiations). The Independents were the Left, Pacifist wing of the Socialist Party. *Translator's note.*

gloomily: "It's horrible. It's all over now. A coup can result in nothing but corpses. We shan't win."

There was a knock at the door. Pegu came in. For a few minutes we stood together in silence.

"All the same, the whole thing will go to the devil," said Pegu after a while.

I shook my head incredulously.

Schorsch ground his teeth.

"My brain is quite stupefied," he growled angrily. "I don't want to hear or see any more. It's enough to drive anyone to despair. All the bells in the city ought to toll to-day ——"

We had tea and parted sadly.

I stayed altogether in my studio. I strove with all my might to shut myself off from the world. It was torment. The clock seemed to stand still. I was tortured by restless curiosity. And then when I reflected on all that had happened I was enraged and meditated the most extraordinary schemes of assassination. Early in the morning Schorsch and the dark girl woke me up, knocking at the door, and brought me news of the murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

"Yes, yes, it will be Eisner's turn now, Mühsam's, Gandorfer's, Levien's, Toller's, and Leviné's, and so on — Just wait and see! And then, bit by bit, they'll begin with the smaller fry. It's extraordinary how those people set to work. They know exactly what they're after," I argued fiercely, "but it never occurs to us to get rid of them one by one in the same way. We're men of character, you see! We are moral! Oh dear, we are such respectable folk!"

"You ass, you yourself have always cursed terrorist methods!" Schorsch reproached me.

"Yes, then! It's quite different now! Nobody is born a revolutionary! Some learn it quicker than others," I argued in self-defence.

The dark girl could not help laughing at our confused and heated arguments. I took the papers and glanced through them.

"Idiots!" I cried, as I read the indignant articles on the murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. "They are howling now about

tyrants and murderers! Noske is simply logical. The Spartacists are forever preaching the seizure of power by force of arms, but if anyone fights against *them* and beats them, they call it a crime! If a man wants a fight he can't complain if his opponents fight too!"

"Yes, but you ass, Noske and Ebert still profess to be Socialists, they shoot down their own people. Don't you understand! *That's* what's so mean!" thundered Schorsch. I saw his point in a flash and said no more.

"There doesn't seem to be such a thing as logic in Bavaria," scoffed the dark girl.

And now Pegu arrived with a fugitive from Berlin. The man was blustering in his manner and talked confusedly. He had a club-foot and hobbled about. He had nowhere to stay and I gave up my little room upstairs to him.

After a long argument Pegu said with a smile: "You just write your verses. Revolution is not your job."

I was vexed and said: "Oh, well, I'd just better live like the upper classes again." And I did so to a certain extent. I thrust from me all the events of the moment. I was more and more in love with the dark girl. She came every day, and we talked together; our friendship grew closer and we were very happy. Occasionally I roamed about the city feeling utterly aloof, and went to all sorts of taverns. At the "Soller" I met the giant again who had marched beside me on November 7th. He recognized me at once and came and sat beside me.

"What are you doing now, my boy?" I asked him.

"I? Oh, I provide for myself," he replied, smiling craftily. "The revolution is all a fraud. Just for the benefit of the bosses. Good-night, workers."

"Provide for yourself? How do you mean?" I asked. He bent down and whispered in my ear: "I sell game."

"Oho. How?" I inquired, and he told me about his new occupation in a half whisper, peering round cautiously. He had procured a rifle and ammunition, a bicycle, and a knapsack.

"I go out every night. It's a pity that cycling is impossible now.

It's a long way out," he said, still in a half whisper. He shot game in Freimann and the forests round about, cleaned out the guts on the spot, packed the game in the knapsack, and sold it in the city.

"So far not a single gamekeeper has caught me, and if he does—he's soon out of the way. I'm a fool if I go hungry so long as there's game to be had. The gentry in Parliament have seized the State; all I say is: roebuck, you're mine—and that's the end." So he argued in self-justification, and I saw his point at once.

"I trust you, mate, you're not a traitor. Would you like to join?" he asked confidently. I nodded and promised to come one day. A robber's life like that had the greatest fascination for me. I recalled all the escapades of my childhood. I pictured the most romantic adventures. How simple, I kept on telling myself on the way home, how simple it is to earn a living. Splendid, glorious! Hundreds and thousands were standing hungry in the streets; I would give them this friendly advice straightway. Surely that would be an act of practical Socialism. And I was able to explain it all so convincingly to several workmen that they really did begin to poach.

Everyone called me "the Anarchist." "Self-help" was my new gospel. I was so full of enthusiasm that I began at once to work out a program which I intended to manifold and distribute secretly among the unemployed. Curiously enough I did not say a word about my scheme to any of my acquaintances.

I developed an ingenuity, surprising even to myself, in devising catchwords. "The revolution has not done away with your poverty, comrade; therefore follow the simple and really practical advice of a well-wisher." So my intended leaflet began, and then in the course of several nights I sketched my program as follows: organization of bands of poachers, control of the sale of the booty through the friendly co-operation of all parties, selection of hiding-places for the poachers in the neighbourhood of the forests, secret signs within the "Self-Help Clubs," and finally arrangements for selling the skins of does and bucks.

I was anxious to get in touch with the giant. He was to be leader of all the clubs, I was prepared to be intellectual adviser.

Meanwhile, the events of the moment distracted me once more. There was no end to these events. Eisner went to the Socialist Conference at Berne and made one of his best speeches, then he marched through the city at the head of a vast procession to protest against the lies told in the press regarding his actions in Berne. The elections were over, the National Assembly had met in Weimar, the provisional constitution of Germany had been passed, and Ebert elected as first President of the German Republic.

My lodger, Pegu, Schorsch, and a workman of our acquaintance turned up in great excitement. The workman told me that a warning word had been given in all the large factories in Munich that counter-revolutionary sailors from Berlin were coming; there was to be a coup and Eisner was to be deposed. The leader was said to be Lotter, a sailor and a member of the Bavarian National Council, and Auer and the Majority Socialists were at the back of it. I was roused again to a fever of excitement which drove me out into the streets. There was a strange, thunderous calm in the city, which made me more nervous than ever. We lost our heads and ran from place to place, wishing to find Mühsam, to put the Spartacist Group on its guard. In the city handbills were being distributed with the words: "Governor, the sands have run out!" There was a crowd before the Trade Union headquarters, and a confused murmur of voices. Some said the Munich garrison was on Eisner's side and would defeat all attacks. Others declared that the Body-Guard and the Engineers were on the side of the insurgents. A few shouted: "Arms! Arms!" Suddenly several Spartacists came running down Pestalozzi Street, waving their arms wildly.

"The station and the telegraph office are already occupied by the counter-revolutionaries!" one of them exclaimed breathlessly. There had been a fight with fire-arms before the Parliament House, said another. "Auer is a traitor!" cried a Spartacist tragically and shook his fist, bellowing louder than ever: "To arms! The revolution is in danger!"

"What's it all about? Where is it then?" asked excited voices in the crowd. The crowd surged, and we joined a procession marching

towards Sendlingertor Square. There we were met by more Spartacists, who told us it was all over.

There was more feverish and confused questioning; we all halted and listened.

"The Guards at the Parliament House fired on the insurgents, and they all ran away!" shouted one man, and he was answered by a hundred voices roaring: "Bravo! Hurrah!"

"The Guards have already cleared the station and the telegraph office!" was the next news.

"Bravo! Hurrah! Down with the counter-revolution!" re-echoed on all sides.

"Be prepared!" the speaker bellowed, and the procession slowly dispersed.

I was furious and cursed my companions because they had dragged me away from my work for nothing, again for nothing.

And because I was out now and on the way, I went to see the Dutchman. His flat was already empty. Removers and servant-girls were standing in the bare rooms. Marietta came and said: "There, if you would like the curtains and carpets, take them." I turned them over to see what there was, and carried home three big packages.

"Come and see us soon; we are at Nymphenburg now," said Marietta getting into the car. "Oh, yes," I called after her absent-mindedly, thinking only of my new possessions. Marvellous hangings and carpets, all genuine, all real Turkish! Come, my boy, I thought in a flash, you can fix up a regular mosque! Shut yourself behind iron doors, and never go out again!

It was really strange how I was perpetually wavering between two alternatives: either I buried myself and hid from the world — at times I was, in truth, almost afraid of it — or I let myself be carried along by it at random. Everything that happened — whether it was the giant's poaching, an idea for a poem, the rise of the reaction, the failure of the revolution, or the gift of the carpets — gripped me with such force, that I set about assimilating it with almost comical vehemence. I began at once to make plans, to develop

them, to indulge in the most foolhardy speculations, and to sketch programs and policies. I had always behaved like this from childhood upwards. In the early days at home I have considered time and again how I could destroy people whom I hated; I worked out detailed plans for the murder of my brother Max, or the postman, or some peasant. In later years these subtly devised schemes were turned against my employer or some politician. I reflected as a rule that, if the person who caused unpleasantness were disposed of, the unpleasantness itself would be removed: if I killed Max, there would be no more beatings; if the postman were out of the way, nobody would tell tales about me; if there were no more peasants, we could do what we liked in their gardens and fields; if there were an end of my employer, there would be an end of slaving for good and all; if I shot Ludendorff, the war must stop; if we picked off the reactionaries one after another, we should have disposed of the reaction. Nothing could be simpler than this point of view.

I was capable of plunging so feverishly into the contemplation of my schemes that at times I really believed myself to be engaged in their realization. All obstacles seemed absurd, and to the consequences of a particular action I gave not a thought. I spent hours, or even days and weeks, in this strange, intensive meditation. But then something fresh suddenly thrust itself into my labouring mind, a book I had read, some experience, some annoyance, and with incredible rapidity my newly made resolutions crumbled to dust, and the whole process began over again.

At times I really seemed to myself like the departed Tartarin de Tarascon. I lived perpetually in the exciting ebb and flow of events; the most insignificant objects became vast and mysterious, stimulating, romantic, and powerful; and yet the very next moment they were ridiculous and meaningless, foolish and dull.

Ah, yes, a mosque! To hide oneself in a mosque! An enchanted refuge in a mean-looking house! That was my latest craze. I forgot all about the Self-Help Clubs. I began to arrange my studio with truly fanatical zeal. Nothing else interested me; absolutely nothing.

Only — by ill fortune the storm was brewing around me.

The Rising

ONE MORNING — I was just going to buy wire tacks — word ran like wild-fire to the remotest corners of the fevered town: “Kurt Eisner murdered! Minister Auer seriously wounded, Osel (Deputy of the Centre Party) dead, attempt on the life of Major Jareis! Shooting and panic in Parliament!”

The date was February 21st. Parliament was to be opened that day. It was bright and cold. I flew along just as I was, without hat or coat. I was in a whirl of excitement.

All the bells began to toll, the trams suddenly stopped, here and there somebody thrust a red flag with mourning crape out of a window, and a sombre, restless silence fell upon the town. Everybody was running to the city with looks of consternation. The farther I went the greater was the excitement of the gloomy, hurrying crowd. A black swarm of humanity was gathering before the Parliament House, including soldiers and armed civilians in its number. I rushed on into Promenade Street to the scene of the murder. Hundreds of people were pressing in a silent circle round the traces of Eisner's blood, now covered over with shavings. Hardly anyone spoke a word; women, and even men, were crying softly. Several soldiers stepped into the centre and erected a pyramid of rifles. One of them had big tears running down his sunburnt cheeks. “Our own Eisner! Our one and only Eisner!” a woman wailed in a loud voice, and now the sobs were heard more plainly. Many people laid flowers on the spot, and then more and more again. Suddenly a motor-lorry full of men, crowded with flags and machine-guns, drove across Promenade Square, with loud shouts of: “Vengeance for Eisner!”

The words rang out like a terrible storm-signal, and a terrible answering roar, like a piercing cry of despair, broke from the throng: "Vengeance! Vengeance for Eisner!" A cold shiver ran down my back. I went on.

Promenade Square was crowded with people, motor-lorries thundered past one after another, and now leaflets began to rain down on the people: "Workers and soldiers! The counter-revolution has struck its first great blow, laying low the best-hated leader of the Socialist revolution!

"The Citizens' Guard, the White Guard, Wednesday's coup: these are steps towards the destruction of the Socialist revolution.

"They have undermined the revolution through the libellous provocations of a corrupt press, which, hypocritically preaching peace and order, created an atmosphere favourable to assassination.

"Workers and soldiers! They are trying to bend your necks under the ancient yoke of militarism and capitalism! Now is the time to act, to save the revolution! Now for the General Strike! Out of the factories and workshops! Down with the bourgeoisie and their criminal accomplices! Long live the Socialist revolution.

"For the Independent Social Democratic Party: Schröder,
Kämpfer, Weiss, Paula Mayer, Fechenbach."

People read the leaflets eagerly. I saw some who were trembling, others pale with rage and thirsting for blood. The same cry for vengeance was re-echoed on all sides. The crowd began to move, and streamed through the city. It was utterly different from November 7th. If anyone had stood up and cried: "Kill the upper-classes! Burn the city! Destroy everything!" they would have done it. All the thousands of minor storms were united in one single tempest, gloomy, sombre, incalculable. I observed it most clearly within myself: I had never been so absolutely subject to a mass impulse as then, never so entirely one with many thousands of my fellows.

The processions swept along to Theresa Common. Below the Bavaria a number of orators were speaking; Toller recited a poem. The women were carried away by it, the men shouted for arms. Then somebody announced that they were to be had from the ar-

senal. A thronging crowd marched off in that direction, and I went with them back to the city. Sailors and soldiers marched at the head of the procession, as if to an assault. The red flags waved in the air. The closed doors of the German Theatre were broken in, glass panes rattled, there was a crash, and everyone rushed into the auditorium.

"From today the Workers' and Soldiers' Council will be in continuous session!" roared a sailor. At first there was an indescribable confusion of trampling feet and cries; commands were shouted; and then, gradually, order asserted itself in the seething mass. The Councillors met; they took their places, and the rest stood at the back, while the galleries were so packed that they seemed likely at any moment to collapse under the weight. I was so wedged in between the bodies of my neighbours that I saw nothing but backs, necks, hair, caps, and hats. From time to time I heard someone speaking, then there were cries of applause, and round about me a dull wave of emotion. I elbowed my way out.

"Down with the newspapers!" I shouted to several bystanders, and they, too, pushed their way into the open.

"Hullo, Strobel!" I cried, looking round at the band that had followed me. It was our comrade in the League of the Free.

"They're talking again and doing nothing!" he grumbled. We went along Bayer Street, and in the distance we saw pillars of smoke and darting flames.

"The plague-hole is burning at last!" said a workman near me. Strobel had disappeared again in the throng. We saw a mass of flame approaching along the street, with shouting people literally dancing round it. They had dragged out a whole edition of the *Münchner Zeitung* and set light to it. The Republican Guard was already posted before the entrance. In Paul Heyse Street above the gate of the *München-Augsburger-Abendzeitung* a large paper placard was posted up: "Occupied by the Workers' Council." I went in past the sentries.

"Stop, what do you want? Out you go, sir!" said a soldier, pulling me up.

"Come, comrade, don't talk to me in that formal way. I must go in, I want to see Ehrhardt!" I cried. He let me through without more ado. I had no business, but simply wanted to enjoy the sight of the dismantled office of this newspaper. I went up the steps into the outer editorial office. There was no young lady there, as in the days when I handed in my reviews. On the door of the editor's room was written: "Committee Room of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. No admittance." One of the former editorial staff appeared and at once greeted me pleasantly enough.

"Ah, Mr. Graf, do you want the Workers' Council?"

"No, no," I smiled maliciously. "I'm only pleased to see that it all belongs to us now."

The man looked pained, and tried to smile: "Well, you know, we were only employees ——"

"Yes, yes, paid to tell lies," I snapped at him spitefully, and went into the Council room. There were several comrades there whom I knew. Some were writing, others hurried in and out with papers in their hands.

"Hullo, your servant, Graf," cried Ehrhardt, and I returned the greeting.

"Can you make any use of me? — I can write," I said.

"Not at the moment — They're only printing leaflets to send outside the city," Ehrhardt explained. I gave him my address and went.

"Comrade," I said to the sentry down below, "don't let anyone and everyone through — In my case there's no harm done, but take care; anybody might slip in." The man scanned me with hostile eyes and growled something after me.

The streets were crowded. The factories were silent and the general strike had begun. Aeroplanes buzzed above the houses, making bold loops and plunges and throwing down leaflets announcing a state of siege. By seven o'clock in the evening the streets were to be cleared. I hurried towards the city. At Stachus I came upon a mob with a speaker in their midst who was saying that the Soviet Republic had been proclaimed in the German Theatre.

"Anyone robbing, stealing, plundering, or acting in opposition to the present Government, will be shot," declared a warning placard. Another forbade all amusements and proclaimed a day of national mourning.

The people were hurrying restlessly to and fro, constantly gathering in crowds, and fresh rumours were constantly arising.

Members of the Central Council were in occupation of the editorial offices of the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, the *Bayrischer Kurier*, the *Münchner Tageblatt*, and the Majority Socialist *Post*, and these papers did not appear. There was only the Independent Socialist *Neue Zeitung*. It was fairly snatched from the hands of the newsboys. Eisner's body, it was said, was already lying in state at the Eastern Cemetery. Meetings were being held in honour of the murdered man in nearly all the large halls in the city. When I returned to Promenade Street a portrait of Eisner framed in mourning crape was leaning against the pyramid of rifles, and round it lay a mountain of flowers and wreaths.

It was cold, and darkness was falling. I was hungry and thirsty and tired. When I reached home I met my lodger, who told me impressively that hostages had been taken. He hobbled up and down in great excitement and said over and over again: "We've got to stick to our guns now! It's only in Munich that we can make anything of the revolutionary movement. The White Guard is outside, and the counter-revolutionaries are plotting in our midst. Unless all the workers are armed at once, we're caught like rats in a trap. All the students at the University yelled: 'Bravo!' when Eisner's murder was made known. Revolution indeed! Well, that filthy hole is shut. They'll all be trapped together. And guillotines must be set to work directly."

He talked on, as if he were the highest authority in the State. As he hobbled to and fro, I took stock of him unobserved. Involuntarily I thought: the whole German Revolution is just like him. It has a club-foot, too, and limps. Suddenly I could not refrain from laughing aloud and crying: "My dear fellow, you're a symbol. You're a real symbol!" He turned his thick head sharply towards

me, paused for a moment, and said curtly: "Don't talk rot! Don't make jokes at a time like this!"

He had come from the Parliament House. There it had been resolved, at his suggestion, to form a revolutionary Artists' Council.

"I suppose they'll design the new guillotines?" I asked maliciously. He did not hear, and exclaimed still more loudly: "You simply must join. We shall take control of the press, the theatre, the cinemas, the universities, the churches, and the academies."

"But who is actually governing?" I inquired.

"The Central Council! All that about the Government is only soothing syrup. A Committee of Eleven exercises authority. Our Artists' Council is subject to nobody. We can do what we choose," he explained. He promptly proceeded to deliver a speech about the true dictatorship, and gradually I grew irritated at this chatter.

"Show me your hands, fellow!" I said in a sudden threatening tone, and seized his short, fleshy fingers. "You have never held a shovel in your hands, nor ever been in a factory! Did the workers send for you? Can't they get on without you? Are the guillotines for people like you?"

He was visibly disconcerted, but he began to bluster and threatened me jokingly: "If you weren't a great poet, I would denounce you on the spot. Take care that I don't have you stood against the wall!"

"You?!" I burst into a contemptuous laugh. "You?! Oh, Lord! Lord!" And I became spiteful again directly. "Oh, yes, that's the easiest part of the job, to denounce people and stand them against a wall."

"No, but joking apart, we really have important functions. There is no end to be done," the club-footed fellow resumed at last. "I am to arrange the revolutionary workers' celebrations in the German Theatre. I am going to arrange soon for Spartacist poetry to be declaimed. I want to recite something of yours." I merely nodded indifferently, and finally the fellow hobbled out at the door.

Left alone, I meditated for a long time how I could serve the revolution, but I could think of nothing to the point. I began to feel

ravenous. The taverns were shut and I had no food in the house. And as for money! I remembered the Dutchman. In spite of the order to clear the streets, I set out for Nymphenburg. As I walked I turned over and over in my mind what use I could be in the revolution. The memory of the Mathes meeting recurred to me casually.

"Come, now, you'll only go and make a fool of yourself again," I growled inwardly, and my enthusiasm and serious purpose evaporated. I was just hungry, that was all.

The streets were deserted. Now and again I met a patrol. "Where are you going?" they asked. "To Nymphenburg, comrades! I am belated," I answered light-heartedly, and they let me proceed. I was astonished at such trustfulness. Once more I was sceptical of the whole revolution.

The further I penetrated into the town, the darker and quieter it became. I no longer saw so much as a lighted window. The wind swept cold round the corners and blew upon me. I felt comfortless and homeless.

Marietta and the Dutchman received me with the utmost kindness. Davringhausen, the over-elegant painter, had been living with them for some time and seemed to be in the position of a friend of the house. We drank several glasses of brandy and I was shown the rooms. Each one was a perfect store-house of ornament. After such a day all this far-fetched luxury seemed like an unreal, extraordinary dream.

We sat down in the comfortable, wainscoated room with a table of the choicest viands. Models of ancient Viking ships hung from the ceiling. A solemn servant waited on us in silence. We drank and ate. I told them what had happened at great length. We went from the dining-room into a spacious smoking-room, opening into a kind of "winter-garden," a glass-roofed conservatory with Chinese vases and exotic plants. We lolled comfortably in the large easy-chairs, and each one blew the smoke from his cigarette into the air. The servant brought champagne, the Dutchman drew out the corks with a pop. He poured the sparkling liquid into the tall, slender glasses.

"They may go so far as to confiscate property now," I said casually.

The Dutchman looked uneasy for a moment. Davringhausen laughed aloud and said it was all nonsense. He scoffed like a snob.

"Oh, come, we are foreigners!" cried Marietta. She told the story — God knows how often she had told it before — of her arrest as a suspected spy, and launched out into reminiscences of her Bohemian life in Paris. We all of us knew every word by heart. It was dull. Nevertheless Davringhausen went on laughing as if he were charmed, and I would not be outdone by him. A man must be grateful for such profitable hospitality.

The Dutchman lounged idly with outstretched legs, and merely made a wry face from time to time.

My boredom grew worse and worse till at last it was a positive torment. I was over-strained, depressed, distracted, and nervous. My eyes were heavy with sleep, my ideas seemed to be exhausted, and the events of the day were still vivid in my excited brain. Each time that I was overcome with the desire to yawn I took a drink, and drank repeatedly, hoping so to feel sooner at ease in my present surroundings, and more particularly to force myself quickly into a jovial mood. Once that was attained, all the rest would follow. It was impossible to sleep and to rest here. Already there were pauses in the conversation, there might be an explosion at any moment, for Marietta was really talking to the empty air. If once she realized our lack of interest, the mischief was done. I seized my champagne glass in desperation, and drank, and drank, and swilled.

Somewhere out in the darkness a long-drawn-out cannon shot reverberated. Its effect on us was almost soothing. We all four raised our heads and listened.

"What can that be?" asked the Dutchman hastily.

"Shooting! — A little shot! — A little series of shots!" laughed Davringhausen, and hitched up his exquisitely creased trousers.

"Really, you know, they're all idiots! It's only the French that can conduct revolutions," said Marietta foolishly. I was still listening. All was silent again.

"Well, that need not prevent us from continuing to look forward to the future with confidence," said Davringhausen with forced irony, and he raised his champagne glass. He, too, seemed very anxious to create a cheerful atmosphere. He toasted Marietta and smiled again. Then he sprang to his feet, went to the gramophone, set it playing, took Marietta's hand, and cried: "Madam, may I have the honour! Just a little dance! A tiny, little dance ——" And the two whirled round.

Good God! How childish, how dull, how stupid, people are made by riches, I thought incessantly. The Dutchman yawned and looked displeased.

"No doubt those fellows fired on the Soviet Republic in the town," I said to him. "Hm. Yes, that scoundrel Arco! ¹" he grumbled. I saw that he was annoyed; probably he was dimly conscious of a disturbance in his life and his comforts. A consoling thought flashed upon me like lightning.

"I'll tell you what! It's very simple!" I shouted at him. "You're a foreigner, and you just proclaim your house and garden as a neutral Soviet Republic. Then nobody will interfere with you!"

Davringhausen had heard, and he burst out laughing: "Wonderful, hahaha, magnificent!" My idea did not fail in its effect; all of a sudden we all became jovial. The Dutchman sprang to his feet and fairly shouted with joy: "Splendid! Excellent! Children, we must celebrate that." He rang for the servant.

"What?" asked Marietta.

"The Soviet Republic of Marietta!" I answered. The Dutchman explained.

"Delightful!" added Davringhausen. The servant came and was told to bring more champagne. The master went to the cellar himself and brought a fresh bottle of whisky. We sat down together again in the best of spirits and began to drink once more.

"Graf, you must stay with us. What does all this row matter to you!" declared Marietta during a pause. I nodded. I was feeling my way back slowly to my accustomed rôle of household jester.

¹ The murderer of Kurt Eisner. *Translator's note.*

"Yes, yes! We must submit, we must yield," I cried, toasting the lady of the house in a thick voice. "Here's to a swinish life!" Davringhausen set the gramophone playing again and danced with Marietta. Our revels grew noisier and noisier. In the end we were all four bounding about the room like Red Indians gone mad, making an appalling uproar; glasses crashed to the ground, each of us snatched anything he could seize, brandished it, and hurled it at the wall or the brass surface of the smoking-room table. I put the full champagne bottle to my lips and gulped noisily, swung it in the air, and reeled round and round like a clumsy bear.

"We'll let the brandy fu-uddle our head — We'll plaster ourselves with filthy mud, we'll excha-ange our wives, And we'll lead free-ee lives!" we all roared tipsily. Everything was blurred, I felt suffocated, clutched myself, then suddenly rushed out to the lavatory and vomited. It seemed as if I were throwing up my very guts. I leaned against the wall and held my hot head in my hands. Through the open door I saw the other three see-sawing round and laughing; every now and then they nudged me, and then yelled confusedly. At last they drew me back to the centre, dragged me into the devastated smoking-room, and dropped me into an easy chair.

"A-a-aha!" I snorted like a horse. "A-a-aha! That's better! Bring me some whisky! Let's have a swill! Come on, come on! Life's a dish of spew, my boy! Come on! A-ah!" I drank again. "Up and at it! Bang! Go on!" I yelled hoarsely, and kept on pouring whisky down my throat. Suddenly the giddiness came on again, I heard a tremendous noise, it stopped, and I swayed and fell down at full length.

It was not till the next day that I came to myself, half-undressed, with a sticky face, wrapped in silken quilts and lying on a sofa in Marietta's room in the tower. My head throbbed and my mouth stank like a cess-pool. I got up hastily, found my soiled clothes, put them on, washed cursorily in the lavatory, and came down to breakfast. The other three were already seated, and they received me with resounding laughter. "Lord, how we sat it out last night! Extraordinary!" I blurted out, and again they were vastly amused.

Though I could not explain why, it tickled my vanity. It's wonderfully easy to amuse people, I thought, you can easily work your way in here.

I sat down and enjoyed the strong coffee and consumed the boiled eggs, the tender ham, and the buttered rolls, with greedy enjoyment. Slowly I began, so to speak, to come to myself. I did not return to the city till about midday. I went more and more frequently to the Dutchman's house, and, finally I lived there altogether.

Eisner's funeral, a few days later, was a moving sight. The procession which started from the Theresa Common seemed to have no end. People had gathered from all parts of Bavaria. The miners of Penzberg and Hausham marched at the head in their black garments, and thousands upon thousands followed after them. It was not only the numerous deputations which brought wreaths; I saw sobbing working-women and proletarians with set faces bearing a last gift of flowers for the dead. The whole of counter-revolutionary Munich gaped. The depressed masses marched in unison, the throng was vast, immense. I had not seen such a gigantic procession since November 7th.

On the wooden casing which covered the fountain in Sendlingertor Square in winter, spectators were sitting close together. Suddenly the wooden roofing broke and collapsed under the weight of the people; they all fell into the ice-cold water, screaming terribly, and struggled out, grappling and punching. "Let 'em all drown, the reactionary brutes!" growled a workman. Everybody laughed at the catastrophe.

The Eastern Cemetery was so full that there was nothing to be seen but heads and banners. Gustav Landauer made a funeral speech, but nobody heard him, though many were there to honour the dead. It really seemed, when the final shout: "Long live the revolution!" re-echoed, as if the very earth were crying aloud.

Through Storm and Slough

ONE DAY THE DARK GIRL went to her parents in Berlin. It was wretched; I had not a soul now to whom I could sometimes speak out what was in my mind. Pegu had been in Blankenburg for some time, and only turned up occasionally. A woman from Berlin had joined my club-footed lodger, and lived upstairs with him in his tiny room. The man spent the whole day somewhere in the Parliament House or the city, and his mistress was always with him. Schorsch was constantly surrounded by the strangest people. I never found him alone. A half-finished oil painting stood on an easel in his studio; he had left the work uncompleted, and the nature prophet, Gusto Gräser, lodged with him. This man had come and never went away again. Most of the time he lay idly on the sofa and complained that he was ill. And when he sat up he began to quote in a parsonic voice all manner of passages from Chinese philosophers, or Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, or his own writings. He was an out and out vegetarian, had long, flowing hair like a figure of Christ, with a flowing beard and moustache; he wore a kind of toga of coarse linen fastened with little wooden pegs, a broad leather belt over it, and short knickers underneath; on his feet he wore leather soles fastened with string. He lived on fruit, vegetables, and bread, and drank water. He was so gentle that he did not even kill the lice and fleas that infested him; his oneness with Nature was so perfect that he smelt like a goat. He professed to wash only in spring-water, and as there were no springs in the town, he did not wash at all. Of course he preached the total renunciation of civilization; in his leather belt he carried square, brown sheets of paper upon which his ideas were

printed in the form of aphorisms; from time to time he sold these or distributed them.

One day I went to see Schorsch and fairly started at the confusion in his studio. I glared at Gräser in silent hostility. My friend was putting on his clothes to go out with me. He buttoned up his waistcoat.

"Buttons — They're — a-ah — they're contrary to reason — quite contrary to reason," murmured the prophet.

"Come," said Schorsch, and he went out with me.

"My dear boy, what ever sort of vermin have you got at your place?" I asked him as we went downstairs.

"I shall never get rid of him," was the reply.

"What? Just chuck him out!" I exclaimed.

"He's holding a meeting this evening. We are all going," said my friend instead of answering. I protested loudly. We met another acquaintance of Schorsch's, a very fashionable man with horn spectacles and a remarkably broad smile. He was an unoccupied, oversophisticated, literary aristocrat from Berlin, who also "went in for the revolution." He was exceedingly sprightly and walked with an affected air.

Schorsch introduced him: "Ado von Achenbach."

We shook hands. The little fellow began to argue at once. I remembered that I had seen him once at "Simplicissimus," and at the Dutchman's former house. He told us that a few days earlier the police had come to the Soviet Congress and arrested Mühsam and Levien, but had released them after an hour or two.

"Altogether — it's really come to a head now — either the Soviet Republic or the reaction — The Trades Unions and the Majority Socialists are making difficulties again — We have still got the dictatorship of the proletariat, but nobody knows what is happening," he went on, and showed us newspapers from other parts. They contained the most appalling lies. *Vorwärts*¹ spoke of civil war in Munich, and of a massacre of the Munich Independent Socialists

¹ The chief organ of the Majority Socialists, published in Berlin. *Translator's note.*

and Spartacists at the instigation of the Bavarian Social Democrats. The *Vossische Zeitung*² declared that Arco, the murderer of Kurt Eisner, was of unsound mind. Other papers represented that no peaceable citizen's life was safe in Munich. The *Berliner Tageblatt* already spoke of a Bavarian Soviet Republic.

A remnant of the Government remained, and worked in co-operation with the Central Council. Everything was uncertain. Houses were searched for hoarded food-stuffs, and a decree issued by Toller recommended that the large hotels should be searched, and that supplies seized there should be allotted to eating houses in the working-class quarters; the citizens had been summoned to give up their arms; but nothing else was done. Kress von Kressenstein, the Nationalist publisher Lehmann, some officers of the higher ranks and students, and other Conservatives were kept as hostages in the hotel "Bayerischer Hof."

"Colonel Epp is in Coburg recruiting volunteers for the White Guard — Noske has recruiting stations in Württemberg and Baden, and all over the country. All the students from other parts are being enrolled. The Munich garrison is very shaky," Achenbach reported péssimistically.

Aeroplanes were circling above our heads.

"What are they about?" I asked.

"They are taking propaganda leaflets out into the country," I was told.

"And what is the position out there?" I asked again.

"So long as Gandorfer³ is with us, it's tolerable, but for the most part the peasants are incited against us and won't sell their produce any more," said Achenbach.

"And they're all at sixes and sevens here," I growled. I was horrified.

"At your service!" said a very pale, lank young man with a thin face, and he joined our party.

² Liberal, published in Berlin. *Translator's note.*

³ The brother of the blind Ludwig Gandorfer who joined Eisner on November 7th, and who had died in the interval.

"Oh, Tautz, at your service!" Schorsch and Achenbach returned the greeting and asked what fresh news there was.

"They say the general strike is called off for the time being. They are discussing the question of arms; Landauer and Marut are educational Councillors," he said. Then we spoke of Gräser's meeting and became more light-hearted.

"He must be a queer fish," cried Tautz.

"Yes, let's all go to Schorsch's studio afterwards and give the fellow such a bad time that he clears out," I proposed.

"By the way, why do you show your faces so seldom in the Artists' Council, you shirkers?" argued Tautz.

"I'm a private person. And anyway, I don't trust all these artists. Why always make the distinction between artists and workers? Either a man makes common cause with the worker, or he keeps out of it. If that's so, we don't need an Artists' Council," I interposed.

"We are workers all the same!" said Tautz, and once more he urged me to come to the Parliament House. I nodded casually.

We parted and met again that evening at the Gräser meeting. We all sat round one table: my lodger and his mistress, Tautz, Achenbach, Schorsch, and myself. The hall was fairly full. There was to be no smoking. We smoked. There was already a good deal of noise. At the front sat ecstatic girls with plaits twisted round their heads, old maids, Wanderbirds,⁴ idealistic cranks, and such-like. There were good plain beer-drinkers there too, and party members, typical Spartacists and others besides.

"What's all this rubbish about? We ought to smoke the fellow out!" my lodger blustered. "These grass-eaters only confuse the issues!"

"Sh-sh! Sh-sh!" the front tables admonished us, casting angry glances in our direction.

Gusto Gräser came marching in and ascended the platform.

"Goat!" yelled one of the audience. There was general laughter,

⁴ Companies of boys and girls who spend their leisure in the woods and mountains; a movement somewhat similar to the Scouts, but without any military features. *Translator's note.*

but some were indignant. Gräser made a gesture as if he were blessing the audience and then began his sermon in a monotonous voice. An incomprehensible hotch-potch of quotations and distorted ideas poured forth upon us, accompanied by applause, laughter, mocking cries, and clapping.

The prophet began to speak of the spirit of non-resistance.

"Spirit indeed! We want brandy!" I shouted brutishly. Our table began to laugh. The noise increased. Gusto Gräser went on speaking, unperturbed.

"Eating grass is contrary to reason!" I jeered again.

"That's right! Long live the dictatorship of the proletariat!" added several others at the table. The rest of the Spartacists present joined in. The Wanderbirds cooed furiously, the old maids and the girls hissed angrily.

"Down with Nature! Long live machinery!" yelled my lodger. "Spartacus is on the march."

"We are no longer human ——" cried Gräser. The rest of his sentence was lost.

"No indeed, you little beast!" I cried in the midst of the uproar.

"The great day cometh," the prophet went on prosing.

"On the spot!" shouted Tautz. Nothing more was to be heard but a confused, angry tumult of voices. Each one trumpeted his own views. It was comical to see Gräser standing helpless on the platform, occasionally shaking his head. A fanatical Spartacist sprang on the table and made the customary propaganda speech: "Workers! The world revolution is progressing! Close the ranks round Spartacus! Down with the bourgeoisie and the traitorous rabble of Majority Socialists! Only by force can we attain power! Long live Liebknecht! Long live Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin!"

Everybody applauded and the meeting broke up amidst general laughter. "Very entertaining! Extraordinary!" we heard on all sides. We went home with Schorsch to his studio and waited for Gräser.

"He's got to go!" we all agreed.

Gräser arrived and we began to make game of him; our jibes were

coarse and mean and designed to wound. But he only replied with gentle murmurs now and then.

"Very well, Nature, if you please! Nature, good neighbour! Tomorrow kindly make your bed in the English Garden!" I concluded almost menacingly, and at last we took our departure. Gusto Gräser did not decamp for two days. He was seen wandering about the town. He was always pursued by a troop of children. We heard that he had settled in a goat-shed.

Numbers of cranks of his type cropped up about this time. One of them wore a long pig-tail and a straw hat, tight check trousers, and a jacket of the same material. He sought out crowds and whispered in everybody's ear: "We are the Christ! Be calm, children of men! Do not make your own cross!" And he vanished as quickly as he had come. Another—raggedly dressed, with a pinched, ill-humoured face—spent most of his time sitting in the cafés and calculating. He made diagrams on large, white sheets of paper, and if anyone spoke to him he declared with a snort that, if each person ate no more than ninety grams of rye bread and ten of meat, there would be an end of penury and distress. He was particularly enraged at the sight of cakes and pastry. When he stood looking at the display in a pastrycook's shop, he broke into angry abuse: "There, look at that, neighbour! Don't you see! This luxury is our ruin. The confectioner is the worst of criminals. Proceedings must be taken against him."

Christians preached at meetings, advocates of nakedness distributed proclamations, individualists and students of the Bible, people who foretold the coming of the millennium, oddities who advocated polygamy, quaint Darwinists and men with strange theories of heredity, Theosophists and Spiritualists: all these disseminated their harmless excesses. One night I was passing Stachus. A lean creature darted at me, hastily thrust a leaflet into my hand, and ran on quickly into the gloom. I stepped under a lamp and looked at the rag. These words were printed on it, and no more: "The Jew interposes! Germans, reflect!"

With all this the popular excitement grew more intense. The

bourgeois papers came out once more, but a Board of Censors controlled them. The Socialist parties indulged in perpetual mutual attacks conducted with great heat. There was a standing proletarian meeting in the Hotel Wagner, where Spartacists and Independents made unending speeches and Majority Socialists were shouted down. Resolutions were drafted, and deputations assembled and invariably presented their demands directly to the Central Council in the Parliament House. People moved perpetually in and out, backwards and forwards.

One day I went with Schorsch to one of these standing assemblies. We stood in the gallery. An energetic sailor was speaking. Suddenly the crowd below divided, the speaker broke off, and a patrol of police marched between rows of terrified people right up to the platform, ascended it and took up their position on it. A drummer beat his drum incessantly and the soldiers pointed their loaded rifles at the body of the hall. There was a panic-stricken bustle, everyone trying to shelter behind his neighbour. The sailor gesticulated and shouted. A soldier pushed him aside and suddenly fired into the air. By this time it was really dangerous. There was a terrible crush. People screamed and ran about, stampeded and belowed, and amidst the confusion piercing cries of distress arose. The maddened crowd pressed towards the door. Anyone who failed to move with the mass was trampled underfoot. The fugitives trod on those who lay on the ground, striking out wildly. We in the gallery made a rush in our alarm for the emergency exits and windows; we battered them through and then suddenly saw more police below in the street, aiming up at us. We were all seized with indescribable terror, dashed back again, rushed down the stairs, and flung ourselves in a confused heap on the chaotic crowd.

"Look out! I'm dead!" someone wailed beneath us.

"Help! I'm being trampled to death! Help!" screamed a voice right under my feet. I pushed outwards with my elbows with all my force, dropped my head on my chest, shut my eyes, and flung the people aside; I pushed harder and harder, was struck on my head and back, pushed again, bent down, and snatched up a girl stream-

ing with blood, who flung her arms round my neck and shrieked. I rushed forwards, neither hearing nor seeing anything further. A number of people seized my arms and threatened to crush me and my burden, but I dropped my arms and was pushed onwards. The girl clung to me and uttered deafening screams, her cheek lay against mine, her warm blood trickled down my neck. In this way I reached the door. There the *gendarmes* stood in a double row and let the people pass out singly. They felt each one all over, searched him for arms, and shoved him out. They gave me such a push that I fell down in the mud with the girl. For a few moments the people dragged us along with them, but at last I got up again and the girl was gone. Everybody was glowering and gaping. I wiped myself off and took breath. The people round about me were gesticulating and cursing the *gendarmes*.

" Idiots! Brutes! What are you about! " they all yelled.

" We are revolutionaries! What do you mean by firing on us? " roared others.

" Go home! Swine! Idiots! " yet another screamed.

" Who sent you? What do you say? Staimer?! The traitor! Don't let them misuse you! Go home! Clear off! You'd better shoot the counter-revolutionaries! " The air rang with a tumult of exclamations. And—it nearly made one laugh—suddenly the *gendarmes* took it humourously, lowered their rifles, and held parley with those in the front of the crowd.

" Oh, come, we're not counter-revolutionaries. They said there was to be a coup here — We're going soon, you'll see," I heard, and the soldiers marched off together.

We marched behind them in close formation towards Stachus. " Fetch arms from the Louisa School! " was the cry. " Strike at once! " bellowed another man. And a third: " To the Central Council! " A tram came buzzing towards us. It was stopped. Someone clambered onto the roof in the twinkling of an eye and tore the trolley from the overhead cable. The car stood still, and so did the next one. " Strike! Go home! Get out of the car! " roared each and every man. The drivers removed the controllers

good-humouredly, got off the cars, and went home. "It's all the same to us, we'll strike if you like," they muttered. We moved on, and one crowd marched to the Parliament House, another past the station to the Louisa School.

"Halt! Halt!" shouted the sentry outside the Parliament House, and pointed his rifle at us again. We stopped and many turned tail.

"Don't shoot! It's a deputation to the Central Council!" cried a sailor.

"That makes no difference! Break up! Nobody can enter the Parliament House!" the sentry shouted in reply. More and more people broke away from us. For a few minutes we stared dumbly at the menacing rifles.

"There's nothing to be done!" murmured the two sailors who were leading us. "On to the Louisa School!" We wheeled round. I left the crowd, walked down Brienner Street, and reached the gate of the Parliament House alone.

"I want to go in to the Revolutionary Artists' Council. My name is Graf," I said to the sentry. He let me pass. After some searching and questioning I found the council room and went in. Only a few people were there, Tautz, Achenbach, Stückgold, the sculptor Pilartz, and my lodger. They sat idly about the room as if they were at an entertainment.

"You actually here, my boy!" cried Tautz, and smiled malignantly.

"Who is that?" asked Stückgold, with a gesture of his hand.

"Graf! Little Oskar Maria!" my lodger informed him.

"A revolutionary too? What is his work? Oh, a writer! Yes, yes, we can make use of him," Stückgold resumed.

"You are idling here, and out of doors there's death and destruction," I snarled, and told them what had happened. They all listened with interest. They did not seem to have anything whatever to do. When I had finished my story they began to argue; most of them abused the Majority Socialists, and my lodger demanded the immediate removal of Staimer from his post. I grew more and more perplexed to know why they were gathered together in this room.

"Well, what do you actually do here?" I asked.

"Tomorrow we meet to discuss a new measure," said Stückgold, but his words were double Dutch to me; he leaned over the table and winked cunningly at the others: "I like our young comrade — eyes are very bo-old —"

They all began to laugh. My lodger went into the next room and I heard the clatter of a typewriter; then he returned and gave me a typed pass, saying that I was an artist and a member of the Revolutionary Council, that I was to be admitted everywhere and was free to go about at all hours. I glanced over the paper, folded it up, put it in my pocket, and said: "That's something at any rate! If you really want me, just let me know. I'll go now."

"To tipple again at Nymphenburg?" asked Tautz with irritable jocularity.

"Maybe, it depends! What is there to do here? I'm only spoiling your fun," I retorted.

"Come often. There's work all right!" several of them called after me as I went out of the door.

Yes, indeed, I went to Nymphenburg again. Why not? I liked it, and it did nobody any harm. And, to be honest, I felt that I was hardly wanted in revolutionary circles. I had no confidence in anything or anybody, and from myself I expected least of all.

When the cry was: "Down with war! No more militarism!" I was with them heart and soul, for that came home to me, I understood it, because I had hated it from my boyhood. I never could make sense of all the subsequent catchwords and phrases. I was one of the many millions who are only roused to activity when their own interest is at stake, who fight when they are forced to defend themselves, who only throw themselves into a struggle when they are conscious of a tangible meaning behind the cause, in accordance with their own desires.

When I reflected carefully it seemed to me that most of the leaders regarded the masses far too subtly, and spoke of things for which they would never freely risk their lives. And for that reason I was profoundly sceptical of the success of the revolutionary movement;

indeed, I went further and was sceptical about the movement itself. True, I was stirred to enthusiasm when some impulse originated with people like myself. I was carried away by the masses, but never by the leaders. And though I really was sometimes roused to activity, it was, in fact, always the same: I joined in when all the rest made a move, I shouted when everyone else was shouting, I attacked when all the rest were attacking; but I did little more than that.

So I was becoming a tippler. Life at the Dutchman's house was excellently adapted for the purpose. This was how we spent the day: Breakfast might be described as a preparatory tonic; so many cups of strong coffee and sufficient solid support fortified us and made us fit. As a rule it was at eleven o'clock, and the wearisome morning was devoted to driving into the city in the car and buying anew such antique mirrors, Chinese vases, old decorated jugs, china, miniatures, lamps, and the like, as had been smashed the night before. Marietta also went to fashionable dressmakers and milliners and made all manner of purchases, and finally we ate a hearty lunch at Böttner's, an elegant restaurant in Theatiner Street; this always took some time. With spirits revived, we then drove back to midday dinner at Nymphenburg. The dishes were most luxurious, and gradually we began to drink. I have never come across a man more skilful in the choice of wines than our host. He was a real genius and performed miracles. We tasted an accurately graded succession of wines, each raising our spirits more than the last. First came light wines, then sparkling wines, then those which induced extraordinary gaiety, next the richer qualities, and last of all those which loosed all restraint. It was curious to see how each of us was affected by this carefully planned mixture of beverages. We glided from pleasant sociability to sentimentality and the desire to sing, melancholy alternated with a violent impulse to display one's cynical wit; gradually we passed into a vacillating mood, but the brain was intensely active, ideas followed one another with growing boldness and clarity; everyone became witty, quick at repartee and conversationally sparkling; indecent jokes flew about, the air was thick with coarse but clever phrases, the conversation became as sharp as

a knife; now violent passions, now supercilious smiles gained the upper hand; everything commonplace and everything profound was brought to light — we seemed to be swimming in tepid water, tingling, and to be rocked and borne out and onwards on great waves.

Some afternoons were monotonous too. None of us knew what to do with our time, we lounged away several hours on a sofa and read without interest, waiting passively for novel sensations in drinking. Coffee was served in Marietta's room in the tower, she recited poems, some caller came, we argued, or the Dutchman tinkled a little on the piano, Davringhausen tried to paint a picture, and I entertained the lady of the house. Occasionally we drove about in the car, but in reality it was all a means of passing the time while we waited for the next carouse. Nothing destroys the will-power so fast as being always over-fed, having no cares, and possessing wealth enough to fulfil every wish on the spot. I had hours of utter wretchedness, after these bouts of drunkenness, and yet never succeeded in resolving to change my way of life. Sometimes I went to the city alone, to my studio. It seemed as alien to me as the memory of outlived experience. It was dusty and smelt of airless mould. I came out again. In the street I met Pegu and Tautz. I stepped between them with a laugh and twined my long arms round their necks.

“ Drunk again? ” asked Tautz, with an acid laugh.

“ No, no, only jolly, awfully jolly! ” I bawled with theatrical vulgarity. “ I'm so demoralized, so-o-o demoralized, you know! But it's so delicious, so-o-o delicious, this swinish life! Delicious! — Magnificent! ” I babbled on unperturbed, and every now and then I snorted and hiccuped. The other two could only laugh.

“ Little Maria, you're a nonentity! Don't, whatever you do, give yourself airs about your Bohemian performances. You're the typical *petit bourgeois*, just a commonplace bourgeois, and nothing more! ” interposed Tautz, at once joking and serious, and Pegu growled: “ That's true! ” But they could not get a rise out of me, for constant drinking had brought me to a point where I no longer took anything seriously; nothing was of vital significance. I went on bawling in a

thick mocking voice: "Oh, yes, I always said so. Oh, yes, I'm the typical *petit bourgeois*, a contemptible bourgeois! Oh, yes. With comedian and tippler as side-lines! That's right! That's right!" I was impervious to insult, shameless, abjectly mean; I went on braying: "Oh, yes, man is a grand creature, awfully grand! Lives on carcasses and grass, swills water, beer, and wine, begets children, and pegs out at last. That's it. There's never been anything like it, never! And then all of a sudden he starts thinking about it, and is angry. And these angry people are called revolutionaries, aren't they? Magnificent! Marvellous!" I babbled on, and we parted with a laugh.

I was never quite sober and never altogether drunk, but wallowed in a betwixt and between state of utter indifference, and fairly breathed a sigh of relief each evening as we sat down to supper at the Dutchman's house. For after supper our revels began. We became jovial again, and I could trot out my indecent, clownish jokes.

We started carousing in the dining-room and went on in the smoking-room or the winter garden, and when we were particularly lively, we went down to the Gothic wine-cellar. This was a cool, circular, apartment with a high, vaulted roof. The walls were covered all round with shelves, on which stood aged bottles, slightly mouldy, filled with the wines of the best and most ancient date. In the middle was a little old table of ash-wood with empty barrels round it, on which we sat. On one side a thin stream of water ran incessantly from a tap into a little stone basin. We sprinkled one another with water, and ended by flooding the whole cellar, throwing the wine-bottles at the door, and making at one another with barrels. Finally in the small hours we went to bed, soaked to the skin.

There were frequent brawls. From sheer nervous irritation, or because something was said that angered her, Marietta would strike a blow at the Dutchman, or spit at him, and scold at us. The man hit back, and we were soon in the thick of a fine scuffle. I passed it all off as a joke, and sometimes the storm dissolved in laughter, but that happened less and less often. As a rule Davringhausen and I

sat by and watched the combatants unmoved, encouraging them now and again.

"That's right! Hit out! Tear 'em to rags and tatters! Plenty of stir and noise! Sti-ir! Noi-oise!" I yelled tipsily, staggering and reeling and gesticulating, and raised my voice above the general uproar. The table in the smoking-room fell over with a crash, the glasses were shattered, peng! And the mirror or the window-panes flew in splinters; chairs spun through the air, the mutilated panels of the door burst, and the heavy curtain sagged. By the time we had finished there was general devastation, and that was the end of the fight. We guests went to bed, Marietta often enough sent for the car and went to visit artist friends in Schwabing, and the Dutchman also went to bed. Next day the lady of the house returned, alone or with several others; and sometimes the Dutchman fetched her home. Then we breakfasted as usual, joked about the tempest of yesterday and mocked at their clawed, scratched faces and the wrecked furniture. So life began again at the beginning.

One day my brother, Maurus, came to the Dutchman and offered to supply him with the best confectionery. We exchanged concealed glances of spying curiosity, and spoke a few indifferent words to each other.

I thought: Just you ask enormous prices and fleece the wealthy brute for all you're worth!

The corners of his mouth quivered slightly with a mocking expression, and his eyes said precisely the same to me: "Be a shark, my boy! A real shark! Stuff yourself as much as you can and get yourself firmly established here. This is the place for sharks!"

Though each mistrusted the other, we understood one another without a word. Maurus supplied quantities of the richest cakes and the best pastry. The Dutchman was a profitable customer.

As time went on I grew quite accustomed to this kind of life. I was equal to every occasion and became indispensable to enliven entertainments and parties; I was as much in my place as the dog in his kennel, or the wine on the table.

Sometimes we drove into the city in the evening and supped at

the "Boubonnière" or "Simplicissimus"; a host of men and women of the world, painters, poets, and artists supped with us, Marietta kept on reciting poems by Lichtenstein and van Hoddies and basked in admiration. After the time when the streets were supposed to be clear a whole procession of cars drove back to the house at Nymphenburg. There was more drinking, sometimes a game of poker, then a quarrel arose and the guests stood by, looking uncomfortable, or fled from the hospitable roof. I passed it all over with peals of laughter.

Passing events, the present, the future, politics, the masses, the revolution, all were erased from my thoughts, and I considered only the immediate present. As I drove through the city, half-stupefied, all former experiences rose in my memory as something past and done with, and served merely as the occasion for a joke or an obscene remark. It always seemed the same: nobody knew who was exercising authority, the Socialists changed their watchwards from day to day, life seemed a perpetual see-saw, in which meetings, riots, shooting, and rumours of a coup followed fast on one another's heels.

And I? I really was a private individual and a tippler, nothing more.

And so March slipped past and April brought the first warm days.

Bad Work

GRAF! GRAFFF!! "Marietta's voice cried from below, shrill and sharp. I opened my eyes with a start.

"Yes!" I answered and sprang quickly out of bed. It is hateful to be startled out of one's sleep like that. I put on my trousers sleepily.

"Oskar Maria!" shouted Davringhausen in piercing ironical tones, and I heard heavy, rapid steps on the carpet. The door was flung open and the curtain drawn aside.

"Now then, little piglet! Now then! Quick, quick! Come! Mr. Tautz wants to speak to you! On the telephone!" said Davringhausen, and went out again: "Make haste. We're at breakfast already! There'll be nothing left for you!"

"Yes, yes, I'm just coming. Directly!" I exclaimed, still fuddled with sleep; I hastily buttoned my waistcoat, slipped into my jacket, and ran downstairs to the telephone.

"Hullo! This is Graf. What is it?" I asked, speaking rather morosely into the mouthpiece.

"Hullo, little Maria, you drunken monster, are you there? Look here, you must come to a meeting of the Artists' Council in the Parliament House at once! There's work, you lazy swine!" said Tautz's voice.

"All right, I'll come. At your service!" I answered, rang off, and went to breakfast.

"Well, what's happening in the political world? Have they made you a Minister?" asked Davringhausen with a laugh, and rammed a slice of bread and butter into his mouth. They all looked at me with mocking curiosity.

"There, just look! Another holiday!" said the Dutchman, and pushed the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* towards me.

"It's the Soviet Republic," said Marietta curtly, and I glanced over the front page of the paper. It contained an enormous proclamation headed, in black type: "To the People of Bavaria!"

"Oh, I say?! Now for some excitement! I must go at once!" I burst out, and hurriedly read on: "The decisive moment has come. Bavaria is a Soviet Republic. The labouring people are masters of their fate." So it continued. The present day, Monday in Passion Week, April 7th, was to be a national festival; the proclamation was signed by the revolutionary Central Council.

"Swine!" growled the Dutchman. He was annoyed. I rejoiced secretly, thinking: now you'll feel it, my boy. I swallowed the rest of my coffee hastily and rose.

"I'm coming too," declared Davringhausen, and we went. I was in a great hurry. I ran across the frozen meadows so that my companion could hardly keep up with me. The exquisite blue of spring was in the sky, the first starlings twittered, aeroplanes shimmered in the sun, and the trams were not running. We reached the city in a bath of perspiration. In the Parliament House all was nervous bustle. Soldiers and armed civilians stood in the arched gateway, setting ammunition in order before the machine-guns. It looked as though they were preparing for defence against expected attacks. No one noticed us, everybody was hurrying about with an air of importance. "White Guards! Munich surrounded! Noske's troops advancing!" Such words passed from mouth to mouth. People ran upstairs and down, they disappeared into committee rooms and came out again. We came to the room occupied by the Artists' Council, and this time it was nearly full. I saw familiar and unfamiliar faces, Schorsch, Achenbach, Tautz, my lodger, Wolfenstein, Georg Kaiser, together with painters and writers from Schwabing. Stückgold's voice rose from one group. Here, too, there was perpetual coming and going. Everybody scanned the elegantly dressed Davringhausen suspiciously. "A well-groomed horse," I heard someone say.

"Come on with me, my boy, I am to censor the *Bayrischer Kurier*.

You come too. I can't manage alone," said Achenbach, and after a brief parley I went with him.

"You're just the right build for these Bavarian parsons. They always try it on with passive resistance," said Achenbach on the way, half hesitating, half swaggering.

"Oh, well, I'll manage it all," I growled indifferently.

The editorial office was empty when we arrived. Achenbach hung his hat and coat on the wall, drew a long manuscript from his breast-pocket, and went to the table. There lay the proofs. I had not taken off my things, and sat down without interest.

"This has got to go into to-day's paper," said Achenbach.

"Oh, yes," I growled again. A compositor came in and greeted us casually.

He came up to the editor's table in a business-like manner, took the proof, and asked: "Is that ready?"

"Oh, yes, we'll have that for the leading article in today's paper," replied Achenbach. "All right," said the compositor, and left the room. We were alone once more, and there seemed to be nothing to do. Achenbach trotted nervously to and fro and said from time to time: "You can see, we shall have to organize all this strictly." For a time I stood by stupidly, then I sat down and tried to relieve my boredom, to make out why I was here at all. I was just going to ask when the door opened and a man of about my own height walked in, with a short, grey moustache and long, stubby hair, a candid face, and gay clothes. A step behind him came a stout, red-faced, heated priest. Both approached Achenbach resolutely and began to argue at once. "Mr. von Achenbach, you have given the printers an article. We wish to state at once that it won't do. Our principles as Christian, Catholic citizens forbid us to accept it. No, no. As I have said, we cannot tolerate it. No, no, in that case——" began the priest, and gesticulated vehemently. The other man promptly backed him up: "No, no, sir, our religion forbids it. You have convictions too, haven't you? We—— we——"

"That makes no difference. It is according to the instructions of

the Central Council, and you must submit. I take full responsibility. The article is merely a declaration," interposed Achenbach.

"No, no! I have been editor here for more than ten years, and I cannot — The article not only attacks the Catholics and our religion, it attacks all religion, Protestantism and Judaism and Mohammedanism. It is a serious violation of religious liberty. You cannot expect us, as a Catholic organ, to preach atheism. Even Mr. Landauer cannot have intended that," cried the priest once more, and protested again and again: "No, no, no, that —"

"I have already told you that you need take no responsibility. In any case, it is no violation of religious liberty to publish an article attacking the various religions as dogmatic. We are addressing intelligent readers, the proletariat. Everybody can judge for himself," Achenbach began in his conciliatory, academic manner; he seemed to enjoy his conversation with these gentlemen thoroughly. Ever since I had known him he had been a reader of Kiekegaard and the mystics, and he loved a debate. But the editors refused to be pacified.

"Judge for themselves? — No, indeed. We, as Catholics, have our God and our religion. That won't do, we made up our minds long ago, Mr. von Achenbach. We don't want to waste time disputing. We beg to see Mr. Landauer. We would rather hand over the paper to you altogether, we would rather abandon the whole thing," persisted the priest.

"Our convictions — you can nail us to the cross, like our Lord Jesus — We Catholics have always been persecuted — No, no, we can't reconcile that before God with our conscience — We are only workers ourselves, we have no quarrel with the Government, but we can't do that — The article is an outrage on religion," began the other man. Achenbach could hardly get in a word. He gesticulated, smiled, toyed with his Browning pistol; he had lost his air of assurance, was unwilling to hurt them, and yet he longed to show himself a dangerous, ferocious man.

"Well, but good Lord! — I have my instructions! — The article must appear! Those are the Council's orders!" he cried shrilly, and then, perhaps because he saw how little he intimidated them,

he began to threaten in his affected manner: "I can have you put against a wall. Remember! This is resistance to the existing authorities! I am the representative of that government authority!"

But the gentlemen were not alarmed; on the contrary, I even observed that the priest smiled with something like pity; and he answered straightway: "Oh, yes, you can do that. We fully expect that. We shall not deny our faith. No, no, we beg to be taken to Landauer. If no understanding is reached, we will retire and leave everything in your hands. But we won't do that — no, no. We would rather die in Christ Jesus. Please take us to Landauer."

Achenbach smiled gently; he was already wavering. Suddenly I sprang to my feet and faced the pair, boiling with rage.

"What?! What's this?! By the Lord God in Heaven, by His Sacrament and Cross, what are you thinking of!" I yelled, and the gentlemen started back and turned to Achenbach, positively appealing to him for help. But I was in full tilt.

"What?! During the war you had to print all the lies that Ludendorff told you to, during the war you preached that men must be killed for the love of God! During the war you printed every lie and played your part in the whole swindle! And now you come along all at once and talk about your religion! You are Catholics? So am I! But I have never come across such a rotten swindle! You're the worst of Pharisees! None of this nonsense! The article will appear and you won't see Landauer! There's nothing to negotiate about! The Government is the Government! You might as well let every washerwoman run and demand to see Landauer! There's nothing more to be said, absolutely nothing! We are not going!" I blustered and foamed at the mouth.

"For Heaven's sake, Mr. von Achenbach! Such blasphemy, such language! Oh, no! oh, no!" wailed the couple. They were quite dumbfounded. They kept on demanding negotiations with Landauer. Achenbach was helpless, and was about to begin arguing again.

"Don't talk nonsense, sir! We have come here with instructions, and that's all about it!" I bawled, and yelped again at the two gentlemen: "You had no religion during the war! It was all good

and Christian then! You prayed, and cheated, and chaffered, so that we might all be sent to our deaths for those criminals and Kaisers! You're just the same as the unemployed, and that's all! This is not a talking-shop, and here's an end! You can go!" I shouted again ferociously, and turned to my comrade: "That's it; there'll be no appeal to Landauer. Put away your Browning! They're only laughing. They know quite well that no one will touch them." I was going to sit down, but the priest and his companion would not give in about Landauer; they determined to go alone and prepared to do so.

"No! Go, if you will. We shall immediately order your arrest!" I bellowed, and said to Achenbach: "Ring up and give instructions to have them arrested at once. Don't show them any consideration. No one showed us any." But my companion did not ring up. There was a short interval of hostile silence. I sat down and looked out of the window. At last the gentlemen began again to negotiate with Achenbach, and after a long, severe tussle, in which I took no part, my comrade declared himself willing to go to Landauer.

"That ends my duties," I said, and I rose and accompanied them. The couple marched in front and we followed. Out in the street I whispered hurriedly to Achenbach: "You're the biggest fool alive!" And I left him. He looked after me a little nonplussed, and then joined the two gentlemen. I heard later from Pegu that Landauer really had respected the gentlemen's convictions and withdrawn the article.

"Indeed. Yes, of course, freedom first and foremost, even if the revolution is destroyed," I jeered. "Ludendorff would have had them shot then and there, so would Noske, but *we* are humane."

"This Soviet Republic is no good either," said my friend. "It'll soon go to pieces. The Communists aren't doing their bit."

A shouting procession with banners came down Sendling Street, led by Levien, who marched along in his spurs and riding boots. The crowd marched to the Schiller memorial, where Levien mounted the plinth and made a speech. It was a queer sight — the man with his Napoleonic gestures, and the calm figure of the poet behind him. He demanded the immediate sequestration of all bank funds, the

opening of their safes, the death penalty for opponents of the revolutionary cause, and more of the like. I could not help laughing. I went on. In Türken Street I knocked against a wizened old man who was regarding the mob with marked interest and mockery.

"Oh, excuse me!" I exclaimed rather stiffly, and I stopped in front of him. He looked into my eyes with a penetrating gaze and smiled: "It doesn't matter, neighbour. I've often had my toes trodden on before." He smiled more broadly and pointed with his walking-stick to the crowd of people. "Those?! They'll all turn good Catholics yet! You'll see!"

"What do you mean?" I asked in astonishment. The man lowered his stick and blinked at me again with cunning, questioning eyes.

"Oh, well, I didn't mean anything. No, no. I say nothing," he said hastily in his Swabian dialect, and he trotted on at a rapid pace. I heard him chuckle to himself. I considered for a moment whether to follow him and require an explanation, but finally let it pass. He's one of these cranks, I thought, and was satisfied. The crowd was surging away from the square now and marching to the Parliament House with *Levien*.

I went to my studio, sat down to the typewriter, and wrote a long letter to the dark girl. Again and again, as I typed sentence after sentence, it came into my head that it was useless to write the letter; but I went on. I was spurred on by a strange yearning, an oppressive sense of sorrow shared with all the world.

"I don't know what I am, nor where my place is," I wrote, "but sometimes it seems to me that other people are not so very different. It's queer, when I read the north German papers, I always long to go secretly and shoot the people who write the articles; first the man that pays them, and then the writers themselves. 'Civil war in Munich,' they write, and 'Unprincipled agitators establish an unexampled reign of terror with the support of a fanatical minority.' The fact is, everybody is eternally impatient for peace. What a horrible, slimy instrument of hell it is, this press! It lied during the war, and when the revolution came they all declared: We were compelled to do it, we were forced. And now? Now they are lying just

the same. I should just like to know what excuse they will invent when they are called to account.

"There is no civil war here, and most of the leaders are very much frightened. They have two sources of alarm; in the first place they are afraid of the masses, and talk them into a more and more extremist mood; and then they are afraid of their own boldness. Not a soul has been hurt here; on the contrary, the moment a man sees himself in danger he appeals to the highest authorities and begins to negotiate; and always, always, he gets what he wants.

"Under the old regime everybody, from the lance-corporal upwards, was insolent: everybody from the office boy to the Minister. As a rule, one never got through to him at all. Nowadays it is all changed. It is almost like Schilda — the citizens get excited and puff their cheeks out and appeal to the supreme authority. And what is that? It's a man who is ready to oblige directly, and inquires: 'Well, what is it? Hm-hm, let me see, I'll have that put right, gentlemen.'

"It is comical, but it is human. It is so human that all human creatures have lost respect for it. And that is what will help to destroy this revolution, for there's no eradicating the race of non-commissioned officers in Germany. They like order, and they're sure to win.

"Did I say that I don't know where my place is? I know now, and I am happy ——"

Dusk was falling in the streets as I walked to Nymphenburg. On the field-path leading to the Dutchman's house I suddenly heard steps behind me. I turned round: a man's figure was approaching. I slackened my pace, for I had always disliked having anyone walking behind me. The man caught up with me. We looked at each other, and both were somewhat disconcerted. He was the grey-headed man of the *Bayrischer Kurier*.

"Good evening, neighbour," I said. He recognized me perfectly.

"Good evening," he said in precisely the same tone. I could not help laughing a little. His face was not at all unfriendly.

"Well, that's funny. But I did make a row at your place to-day," I resumed.

"Oh, yes, that wasn't so bad. It's just a difference of opinion — a matter of temperament," he replied cheerfully. It was soothing.

"Well, yes, I am sometimes a bit excitable," I responded.

"You belong to the Government?" my companion inquired.

"Oh, no, I only help a bit now and then," I answered innocently.

"Ah, yes. Well, there's plenty of work. Do you live out here?" he asked.

"Yes — and no; as a matter of fact I only pay a visit at that house sometimes," I replied.

"Really, the Dutch gentleman over there? Then we are neighbours of a sort. Indeed," said the grey-headed man, and he went to a house standing on one side. "I live here. Good-night."

"Good-night," I called back genially, and thought: bad luck; if Noske's troops win you're in for it. He'll denounce you at once.

Davringhausen was back again already, the Dutchman was in a good humour, and Marietta asked gaily: "Well, what about the Minister?" They all three laughed a mocking laugh.

"I? Oh, I shall stay here as your court jester," I said to the Dutchman, and told him my experiences. Davringhausen reported that he left at once when he saw the Artists' Council. We passed the night in the usual manner. But this time the right mood was not upon me, and next day I went into the city again. It had a warlike appearance now. There were armed civilians everywhere. The Communists had occupied the Catholic club-house and made shift to print their *Rote Fahne* there. There were immense bales of paper in front of the door, forming a kind of barricade, a machine-gun stood in the hall, and a member of the party marched to and fro on patrol duty. I approached him. He recognized me and let me through. They were using the ground-floor as a guard-room and arms of all sorts were lying about; I saw faces, familiar and unfamiliar, and people interrupting one another with self-important airs, and then, again, cracking jokes. Upstairs in one of the rooms I met a girl of gigantic stature with the head of a Titus, who answered to the name of Hilda. Several Spartacists asked me whether I knew of a

trustworthy printer ; I knew of none and no light was thrown on the subject by our discussion. I went away again.

In the ante-room to the Artists' Council chamber I came upon my lodger, who was supervising the news as it came in and drafting the official statements for the press.

" You've come just at the right moment ! Look here. You can type, can't you ? " he asked me, and when I nodded he told me to sit down to the machine. I did so and he dictated.

" The Hungarian Soviet Republic sends revolutionary greetings to its brothers in Bavaria," he declared, and glanced about absent-mindedly over the typed sheets lying on the table. The telephone rang. He put the receiver to his ear.

" News department of the Central Council ! Hullo ! Is that you, Titus ? " he called, and took a sheet of paper. " Wait a moment. What's that ? The Works Council in Augsburg have gone to Bamberg to negotiate with Hoffmann.¹ Low down ! Who gave the order ? . . . What ? . . . No, no, speak quietly. The Soviet Government is firmly established. . . . Yes, yes, I know that. . . . Schneppenhorst in Nuremberg, the scoundrel ; yes, that's so. . . . Yes, Graf's here. . . . Hullo ! Can you hear me ? Noske's going to make a clean sweep, oh, yes, I know — We'll pepper him ! "

He hung up the receiver and turned to me again : " The Majority Socialists have joined with us a hundred and one times, and they always turn traitors. I was there myself. Schneppenhorst agreed to the proclamation of the Soviet Republic, and now he's in Nuremberg, spying on us. To the devil with the Independents ! They're always jabbering about unity, and they join up with these traitors. There's nothing for it but Spartacus. Nothing will be done till the Communists have complete control. The very brutes don't know where they are ! "

I waited for his dictation and said nothing. He was no longer in a hurry, and lit a cigarette and wanted to chat with me.

" Are you still tipling ? " he asked.

" Yes, of course," I answered, and stood up.

¹ Head of the Bavarian Government deposed by the Soviets. *Translator's note.*

"Are you off again?"

"What is the good of staying here? Tell Pegu I shall be at the studio, and tell him to come and see me," I answered curtly, and made no reply to his jibes.

Outside I met Schorsch.

"Hullo! Graf! Schorsch! Come with us!" cried a voice from a passing car, which drew up. It was the Nymphenburg household. We got in and lunched with them at Böttner's. My friend was ravenous and exhausted. He swallowed everything with eager haste and gulped down his wine. We rose and went out to the lavatory.

"Eat your fill. Eat and drink, my boy, as much as you can. We're already as good as hung," I whispered to Schorsch, and his eyes were glassy as he nodded assent. He drove out to the Dutchman's with us. On the road we picked up Achenbach. A gruesome banquet followed. We raved brutishly. Suddenly Schorsch broke down and began to cry.

"Mary! Mary!" he shrieked despairingly, and ran like a madman out the front door into the starlit night. He stumbled and fell into a newly dug ditch. There he lay, wailing like a broken creature: "Mary! Mary!" He vomited and fumbled helplessly in the filth. Achenbach and I had run after him and dragged him out of the ditch. We carried him up to bed. He dropped down in a deep sleep and there was a rattle in his throat, like a dying animal.

"He can't bear to live alone. He is pining for his Mary," I murmured to Achenbach.

"Yes, yes, we all suffer from that complex. We can none of us bear to be alone," he said with uncalled-for smartness.

The drinking-bout had been suddenly interrupted and had left a mood of disgust behind it. Marietta was irritated and scolded us all, the Dutchman grumbled in vexation, and we all went to bed without wasting many words.

Next morning at breakfast our friend was himself again. Only he had torn his trousers, and wore a fresh pair of the Dutchman's. After midday dinner the three of us walked into the city.

"There! Listen! Listen!" I cried in alarm as we left the

Dutchman's garden. We all three pricked up our ears. Taggg — daraggg — daggg! came the distant rumble.

"Something's happening!" exclaimed Schorsch, and we began to run.

"It's a coup! Barricades!" gasped Achenbach. We heard shots from the railway station, then volleys from machine-guns, and finally the thunder of cannon. We ran down Nymphenburg Street as fast as we could, towards Stiglmaier Square. There masses of people were racing along, with and without rifles. They were scuffling and shouting in front of the Lion Beer Cellar.

The firing was quite near now, and remarkably violent. More and more people rushed along Dachau Street.

"What is it? What? A coup!?" I asked of a running workman.

"Yes! The Hoffmann Government and the Majority crew!" he retorted breathlessly. He was gone. The air was humming with aeroplanes which were scattering a white cloud of leaflets. Little groups of people ran hither and thither and snatched the papers as they fluttered down, fought for them, read them, and began to curse and swear furiously. Red Guards and soldiers aimed at the aeroplanes and fired again and again. It was ear-splitting.

"Schneppenhorst's lies! The treachery of the Majority Socialists!" I heard. "On we go! To the attack! To the railway station!" At last I got hold of a man who had a leaflet, and I read rapidly: "To the labouring people of Munich! Workers and Soldiers!" I had just caught sight of the words: "The Central Council is declared to be deposed," and "alien agitators, who are pursuing a merely selfish policy," when the man tore the paper to bits. "The scoundrels! The brutes!" he snarled. I was wedged in the crowd and had lost my companions. I whistled, but there was no answering signal. Nothing could be heard but the firing and banging, the tumult and trampling. Above our heads little sparks from the rifles were continually flashing in the air and vanishing in clouds of smoke. I pushed my way through the crowd with difficulty, elbowed my neighbours, ran a few steps further, and reached the outskirts of Station Square. There I saw a constant ebb and flow. Armed

crowds from Prielmayr Street, Schützen Street, Schiller Street, and Bayer Street were repeatedly attacking the railway station, whence came volleys of bullets; they retreated, bellowing, and shrieking, and advanced again with renewed fury.

"Down with them! Down with them! Down with them!" reverberated in the air, the machine-guns rattled, the assailants rushed forwards again and fired with a will. Sontheimer appeared in the cloud of smoke, brandishing his rifle and shouting back to the people: "Onwards! Attack! Attack!" He had two additional rifles, two pairs of field-glasses dangled from his belt, and he wore a broad, red scarf in which was stuck a large revolver. Bullets whistled round his head. "Onwards! Up and at them! Attack!" he roared again, and the whole mass rushed after him; another cannon-shot, window-panes rattled, the wounded fell, the houses and the very earth shook, the crowd in which I was wedged surged onwards with the assailants and into the crashing station with a terrible clamour.

Unarmed! Just to be shot down like a mere lump of flesh! was the thought that burned in my bewildered brain, and I submitted to be pushed onwards with teeth set and fists convulsively clenched. Suddenly I yelled in a voice of fury to the people wedged around me: "By the Lord God and His Sacrament, what is it all about! Whom are they attacking?!" I roared so loud that the people pressing against me started and trembled. I was ready to seize anybody I could get hold of and tear him to pieces, simply and solely in the blind passion not to be shot down for nothing at all. And all the time I was thinking as well: Stupid! Asinine! You always get mixed up with the mob, and you never have any object.

Since then I have been able to imagine how a coward is transformed into a hero.

"They're attacking the Bamberg lot! And Hoffmann, you ass!" came the retort, and I felt a clear sense of relief.

"Oh, well, that's all right. Go it then. Go it," I answered. Nobody heard. The firing had pretty well stopped, and the cry resounded in the lofty hall: "Victory! Victory! Long live the Soviet Republic!"

The railway station had been stormed and occupied by the Communists. I caught sight of laughing faces. Our crowd had entered the hall from Arnulf Street, and I came out again with them into Bayer Street. The packed throng trickled away like spilt pap, and flowed across the square and into the streets. Each individual joined in the general sigh of relief. And now, at last, I heard what had happened. A handful of Majority Socialists had won over several Barracks Councils to the Hoffmann Government secretly during the previous night; in the name of the whole Munich garrison they had distributed a placard attacking the Soviet Republic, proclaimed martial law, occupied the most important buildings, declared that the Central Council was deposed, arrested Mühsam, Wadler, and one or two other Councillors, and removed them to lower Bavaria. Thereupon the Central Council called a general strike, the Communists assumed the direction of the armed factory hands and the masses, the insurgents were defeated, disarmed, and sent flying.

A new Central Council assumed authority, the Communists seized control, the so-called second Soviet Republic started its career, and the organization of the Red Army, already begun but hitherto prosecuted without energy, was accomplished literally overnight.

The Collapse

FOR A WHOLE FORTNIGHT the working masses of Munich gathered and made ready to resist Noske's advancing troops and the lurking revolt of the opponents in their midst. For a whole fortnight the best-known of the new rulers, Leviné-Nissen, Levien, Egelhofer, Landauer, Toller, and Axelrod struggled to establish a Communist Soviet Republic with a host of haphazard, fickle supporters and unreliable helpers. For a whole fortnight the well-to-do felt uncomfortable and seemed to have crept away into places of concealment.

"Now there'll be a minimum allowance for everyone," I said to the Dutchman. "For instance, you're a musician. You'll get twenty marks a week from the State, or little more, and so shall I." The fellow puckered his brow for a moment, and when I laughed he joined in frostily. Our house was still an island unaffected by events outside. Life went on as before, quite undisturbed by happenings in the outer world. One day I visited my patroness in the city. She was a little uneasy.

"What is going to happen, Mr. Graf? They will let me rent my house — You know, I don't object in the least, I only want to know that my furniture and pictures won't be damaged. What would you advise me to do?" she asked me. I shrugged my shoulders. I could think of nothing more.

"Give your pictures to the State to be kept in safety," I advised her. "There is sure to be heavy fighting."

She nodded and reflected for a few minutes, then she said more cheerfully: "Well, we're all human — I am sure the workers are right — I can understand — All I want for myself is peace."

"Peaceable people will be left in peace. There's no doubt about that," I said, and promised to stand by her whenever the occasion might arise. Those in supreme authority did the same. Her friends and acquaintances, however rich they were, had only to name her and they found protection.

The professor grumbled timidly, then laughed nervously and talked of houses searched in his neighbourhood. The people had given brandy to the Reds and behaved amiably, and they had gone away again. There was a faint suggestion of scorn in his words.

"Yes, my dear sir, there's a hard time coming — a terrible time," he cried with something of a sigh, and gazed before him.

"I think there's going to be a terrible massacre, sir," I said, following up his idea, "but it might be prevented."

"Prevented? How?"

"If the most respected professors and citizens would address an open letter to the Hoffmann Government, saying that nobody was being plundered and robbed and terrorized in Munich. I mean, if the really influential people here would make a stand against the horrible lies that are being spread abroad outside the city; if they would mediate," I said.

"But it's impossible. We can't. It might be regarded as a counter-revolutionary action," he cried, and he stressed the concluding words ironically.

"Well, then, there's no help for it. So far as I know, they're positively grateful, if one really wants to help," I repeated.

"Yes, my dear Graf, you are on their side — I can't follow you there," he concluded.

I went to my studio. I heard the lock of the next room creaking, then a knock at my door.

"For God's sake, Mr. Graf, help me. I have been arrested as a hostage! They let me go again, but I am to present myself to the police tomorrow and be interned again," whimpered my neighbour, a stoutish painter. He was trembling and on the verge of tears.

"But shall you go?! Why should you? Sit down. It's absurd. It's

sure to be a mistake," I exclaimed, as I let him in. He told me that his neighbour, a hysterical woman and a painter, had denounced him to the Communists as a counter-revolutionary spy.

"You know them. Do come! Help me. I will never forget it, never!" he implored.

"I don't know anyone among the police, but come along, we'll go and see," I said consolingly, and accompanied him to the police headquarters. We had no difficulty in passing the sentries. Every one of these seemingly ferocious men unbent at once when I spoke to him in good Bavarian. We got through and went upstairs to the very room where I had myself been interrogated in January. The giant girl, Hilda, was there, and a few more were sitting on the tables, men with rifles lounged about and smoked cigarettes in a cheerful mood, while a few more were standing at the files and searching through documents.

"Hullo, Graf? What do you want?" asked Hilda in her bluff manner. They all gathered round us.

"Look here, it's sheer lunacy to arrest this man! He's been my neighbour for a year and a day. I'll stand bail for him any time. What is there against him?" I blustered good-humouredly.

"Well, there is information against him. A counter-revolutionary. But if you stand bail," said one of the men, and he called to Hilda: "Write a certificate to say there's nothing against him." The giant girl went into the next room and I heard the clatter of a typewriter, and chatted casually with the others. Hilda brought a certificate saying that my neighbour was under the protection of the Soviet Government. We took our departure. The rescued man would have liked to embrace me, and made all manner of promises, thanking me and pressing my hand again and again.

Outside my studio I met Pegu. He was taciturn and exhausted.

"I can't do the work of four. I'm tired," he said, and stretched himself on the sofa. I knew only too well that he needed rest. He was the competent "ghost" in everything that was done; he made up the newspapers which appeared under other names, he slaved for whole nights together and put through all the unnamed details on

behalf of the revolution; he was indefatigable, coming and doing what he was asked and then going off elsewhere.

"There is the key of my studio. You can make yourself at home here. I am really living out at Nymphenburg," I said. He nodded. I left him to go to sleep and went away.

In the streets battalions of workers, rifles at the shoulder, were unceasingly marching by. Every man gazed earnestly, almost sadly before him. They tramped along with a gloomy tread behind laden motor-lorries through the cheering crowds. There were old, worn-out, bearded workers and young fellows with brave eyes. They did not seem greatly inspired. The young faces seemed to say: "We can't be cads!" And the brows of the older ones were knitted with a weight of unspoken responsibility. This army marched along almost as in 1917 and 1918, in the last years of the war, stoical, hard, embittered, accepting what must be.

I flushed with shame. "Good luck, comrade. There are some cigarettes for you," I said to an old man, and gave him my box. My heart was bursting. He laughed a little, opened his eyes and dropped them again, and murmured: "Thanks."

The dark girl wrote, and seemed anxious. I saw that one or more of my letters had gone astray, and I could gauge what lies the Berlin papers were telling about the Soviet Republic.

Our revels grew duller; there was no longer any gaiety in them. At night we heard the cannon thundering in the distance, the window-panes rattled faintly, and the walls trembled a little. I had no pleasure in the wine. The shambles, the shambles, was the dark thought forever in my mind, and I pictured to myself with horror how they would be slaughtered, those thousands and tens of thousands of workers. There was no getting away from the tribe of non-commissioned officers. They understood nothing but war and slaughter.

"A-ah, fill my glass! Fill my glass, old boy! Let's drown ourselves!" I cried, and drank with a snort.

One night the dog began to bark and would not stop. The bell rang again and again. There was a sound of shouting outside the gate.

"Who is there?" we three men called all together at the open front door, and down below by the light of the lamp at the gate we saw two figures.

"Schorsch! Achenbach!" they answered. They had gone to Dachau on foot as hospital orderlies, but had been sent back. We were overjoyed. We let them in. Then the bell rang again. Tautz came, and my lodger, and Pegu.

This meeting roused us to our former gaiety. We revelled till daybreak. Sometimes we argued hotly, the Dutchman sat down to the piano, Pegu composed a song, a melody was found, and finally we were all singing fervently:

Brothers, we're fighting the battle of freedom!
Brothers, arise now and strike the last blow!
Victory now gives victory for ever!
Unity, brothers, and triumph is ours!

"This revolution lacks a song! That is what is wrong," I said. The others laughed.

"Romanticism! The revolution needs only arms," said Tautz.

"The French revolution was victorious at Jemappes with the help of the Marseillaise," I retorted.

"At any rate the whole of France was revolutionary, and not a single town," interposed the Dutchman scornfully.

"Yes, yes, that's so," Davringhausen laughed snobbishly. "Gentlemen, we'd better put on mourning."

"We shall prevail," cried Achenbach and my lodger, without inspiring conviction.

"We shall lose," I said emotionally. "But they can never kill the revolution."

"Very true," said Schorsch, as if he were at a meeting.

Next day the first and last parade of the Red Army was held in Ludwig Street. The ranks marched past the Ministry of War, red flags waved, and cries of "Hurrah!" re-echoed. Packed crowds of spectators thronged the pavements. Egelhofer, the Commander of the Red Army, spoke from an open window. There he stood in

sailor's uniform, resolute and straightforward, raising his hand occasionally. No one could listen without believing him.

The three Socialist parties made preparations to celebrate the first of May. The Majority Socialists wanted to have the customary procession and meetings; the Independents agreed, but the Communists wanted war to the last drop of blood. The schools and public buildings were being used as barracks, as they had been in the war. People went in and out. Troops of soldiers came, and deputations, and loaded motor-lorries drove away, out to the battle-field at Dachau.

In the hotel "Vier Jahreszeiten" some members of an anti-Semitic, counter-revolutionary organization were arrested; they had been holding secret communication with the Government troops and working with the help of forged seals against the Soviet dictatorship. The papers announced that they were housed as hostages in the Luitpold School.

The Red Army yielded to superior force. Armed men poured into the town from all sides, bringing the most gruesome reports. The Government troops had shot the insurgents mercilessly everywhere: in Rosenheim, in Starnberg, in Puchheim, in Schleissheim, and Perlach. Wounded Red Guards, hospital orderlies, and people who had no part in the struggle were among the victims.

The leaders of the Independent Socialists called upon their followers to hand over their arms and resume the general strike. Many gave up their rifles and ammunition. The workers' Army crumbled away. Only a fraction held together, powerless and bewildered. These few, mainly Communists, took refuge in buildings and put up such poor defence as they could.

Once more aeroplanes appeared in the sky. There was a rain of proclamations by the Hoffmann Government. There were again references to unprincipled and selfish agitators and alien cranks. The troops were coming, not as a so-called "White Guard," but merely to restore peace and order, so it was said, in order to safeguard the coming establishment of the Socialist State and the peace-

ful realization of the Soviet ideal. The ringleaders of the misguided working masses were threatened with stern justice, but mercy would be shown to the misguided populace, for "Comrade Hoffmann was no reactionary, no counter-revolutionary, but a zealous protagonist of the Socialist movement." Moreover, trainloads of provisions for Munich were waiting in Augsburg.

The troops and volunteer bands of Noske and Schneppenhorst forced their way into the suburbs, pushed on, and reached the centre of the town. The workers resisted with unparalleled courage. All Munich was afoot, all Munich trembled. Shrapnel flew, cannon thundered, machine-guns rattled, armoured cars spat fire, houses crashed inwards, the inhabitants dashed into the street in helpless despair, weeping and wailing, cursing and shrieking. This was war in very deed, screaming in the air.

"The hostages in the Luitpold School have been murdered." The cry flew from mouth to mouth. The workers had shot those prisoners, and two captured Government soldiers.

"Sontheimer is dead! Egelhofer shot! Landauer murdered!" came almost like a retort, and now the soldiers began a regular hunt for suspected civilians. A terrible epidemic of denunciation set in. Nobody was safe. Anyone who had an enemy could consign him to destruction by a couple of words. The concealed bourgeoisie suddenly reappeared and ran busily after the troops, carrying rifles and wearing the blue and white arm-band of the Citizens' Guard. Their eyes searched greedily, they pointed here and there, ran after somebody, struck him with a yell, spat at him, belaboured him like savages, and dragged their victim, nearly beaten to death, to the soldiers. Or the process was even more rapid: the unsuspecting victim stood dumbfounded, the pack rushed at him, surrounded him, a shot rang out, and that was the end. They dispersed, laughing and satisfied.

I made a long detour with Davringhausen and came to the home of an acquaintance in the city. There we heard that Schorsch, Achenbach, and a number of those we knew, had been arrested. The Citizens' Guard had undertaken the task of searching all the studios

in Schwabing, with soldiers to assist. Anyone found there was arrested. I left Davringhausen with this acquaintance and set out. "Make yourself scarce, my boy!" a workman whispered to me in a doorway; he had recognized me, and told me hurriedly that my studio had been searched. The comrades who lived there had gone away shortly beforehand. One of them had been shot in the street. Still cowering and bounding across the roads, I reached Dachau-Augusta Street. I made my way onwards through people who were clinging in terror to the walls, for the fighting at the station was particularly fierce. An armoured car thundered down from Stiglmaier Square, shooting incessantly. We all crouched against the locked doors, seeking protection, then we dashed headlong to the arched gateway of the Apollo Theatre. The armoured car was gone. We ran into the street again and watched the murderous bombardment of the police station, which the workers had occupied. It crashed and smoked, the walls crumbled, windows rattled, splinters flew. The besieged men fired back obstinately, but gradually their fire slackened, the shots from the house were fewer and fewer. A company of Government troops advanced from Mars Street with loaded rifles, and broke open the door. Not a shot came from within.

"They are all dead," said one of our company. The firing had ceased and the armoured car was at the railway station. We wished to proceed. An old woman hobbled across the road. At the corner a Government soldier took aim. A shot rang out, the old woman fell and, after a short convulsive struggle, lay still.

"God have mercy! God have mercy!" screamed a girl, wringing her hands.

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" we all bellowed. A little boy had detached himself from us unobserved, and ran with a fluttering red handkerchief to the dead body. Another shot rang out. The child gave a piercing shriek, staggered, and lay still.

"Murderers! Scoundrels!" we all cried in helpless horror. Fists were shaken. Many wept.

"Off with you! Move on!" roared a voice in front. The soldier

took aim again. We ran like mad into the courtyard behind and waited, cowering together. Every one of us was shaking, every one was pale with rage. Nobody spoke a word. We stood like penned animals in a bursting storm.

"They're not human!" murmured an old man after a long pause, and he wiped his eyes.

"They're brutes! They're butchers!" sobbed the girl. It was not for some hours that things became quieter. I walked on.

Everywhere there were files of arrested workers, harassed, beaten till the blood flowed, their arms held above their heads. On either side and before and behind marched soldiers, who bawled when an exhausted arm dropped, struck the prisoners in the ribs with the butts of their rifles, and hit their trembling victims with their fists. I wanted to cry aloud, but I clenched my teeth and swallowed my rage. My eyes were hot with tears, I caught many a glance and nearly broke down, then pulled myself together and gazed into the eyes of another prisoner.

These are all my brothers, I thought, overwhelmed with grief; they were born into the world, trained by the rod, flung out to fend for themselves; they were apprenticed and the rod was still in use; as journeymen they were exploited, and in the end they became soldiers and fought for those who beat them.

And now?

They have all lived a dog's life, as I have, and have always had to obey orders and to cower, and now, because they tried to bite, they are killed.

Prisoners all! —

The inhabitants of the working-class quarters gazed in wide-eyed consternation at these processions, and compressed their lips dumbly.

By roundabout ways I reached Ludwig Street. There the shooting was over. Fashionably dressed people were taking the air here and at the cafés in the Palace Garden. Well-dressed, stout members of the Citizens' Guard and men of the world with monocles were busy chatting with soldiers and officers: elegant ladies were distributing

cigarettes, cigars, and chocolate, flirting and joking with lieutenants in tight-fitting uniforms.

A train of prisoners came along. Everybody ran out at once to see them, shouting and hooting, spitting, cursing, menacing. Elegant ladies mustered up courage to strike the prisoners, old-fashioned officers' wives glowered indignantly and brandished their faded parasols, Citizen Guards dealt surreptitious blows, and the men of the world smiled approval. Nobody checked them.

For days we heard of nothing but arrests and executions. Twenty-one members of a Catholic journeymen's club, who were holding a meeting in a neighbouring room without a suspicion of what was going on, were seized and dragged down to a cellar and literally butchered.

The Soviet Republic was at an end. The revolution was overcome. The court martial worked diligently.

Gustav Noske, once a worker, now the Social Democratic Minister of Defence, addressed the following telegram to General von Oven and General Möhl:

“Hearty acknowledgments for your circumspect and successful conduct of operations in Munich, and warm thanks to the troops for their achievements.”

Every evening the bands of the Government regiments played patriotic songs and pieces in the large beer-gardens, and were greeted with thunderous applause.

I was awaiting my own arrest now, and nothing else. I wanted it. I knew once and for all where my place was, and with whom.

The Curtain Falls

IT WAS STRANGE; my studio had been searched, and the police made no further search for me. It was even stranger that the gentleman from the *Bayrischer Kurier* lived close by and had only to inform against me; many of my enemies knew where I was, but nothing happened. Strangest of all, one day six soldiers and an officer came to the Dutchman's house because, so the officer said, champagne parties were given there. It was not difficult to see from his behaviour and questions that he expected to find concealed revolutionaries.

"And who is that?" asked the officer of the master and Marietta, pointing to me.

"My name is Graf and I live here. This is my identification card," I answered. "I only have this employment book. I am no longer a baker but an author." The officer glanced carelessly through my papers and gave them back.

"This gentleman is a poet. He is a friend of ours," said Marietta firmly. The officer made them take him to the room where I generally slept and kept my manuscripts. He looked through several sheets on the table, said no more, and went away with the soldiers. Plainly, the luxurious house had been too much for him.

"They can't hurt you," said Marietta, "you're just a standing guest of ours. We are foreigners."

"I don't mind if they do hurt me — It's all the same to me now," I murmured.

She was offended. "Stupid!" she cried. I said no more.

My days passed in gloomy expectation. Various revolutionaries turned up. I persuaded the Dutchman to give money to the fugitives.

Once I went to my studio. It was locked as usual. But the books were taken away and the drawers had been ransacked and stood open. I waited for a time to see if my neighbour would give any sign. All was silent. The man must have left or gone on a journey. I should have liked to ask him what had happened. I knocked at his door without result. Later on I saw him going about as a member of the Citizens' Guard.

As I went out through the two muddy courtyards several of the inhabitants saw me. "You're another of those dogs of Reds," their looks said plainly. But they let me pass.

Out in the street I thought incessantly: Now you'll be arrested. There! The soldier is coming up to you.

I was at once eager and indifferent. When the man had passed by, the same train of thought began again. Nevertheless, it did not occur to me to go back to Nymphenburg. I could not keep still. I had no rest.

The town looked cruel. Machine-guns stood at the entrance to the public buildings, barbed wire was stretched across, or so-called *chevaux-de-frise* set up. Two heavily armed sentries tramped to and fro. The military were in control. Soldiers were everywhere, singly or in bands, officers wearing decorations walked along the pavements or drove past in cars, and I saw busy members of the Citizens' Guard. The persecution of the Soviet supporters continued more or less underground. There was a zealous search for Toller, Leviné, Levien, Axelrod, and the other leaders. Again and again I saw files of prisoners, few or many, and always the people ran behind and the usual yelping began. Here and there a few workers crept about the streets, frightened, like beaten dogs. We exchanged glances and passed one another in silence. Each of us knew.

The prisons were overflowing, and the executions continued. "Those savages! Those Hottentots!" snarled a gentleman in Marie Square, and told of the Communist ravages in the police offices. Shortly before the troops entered the city they had thrown most of the records into the courtyard and burnt them. In Isartor Square I was told that most of those who had been shot were lying at the

Eastern Cemetery. I was going to the hairdresser's to have a word with my sister Nanny. They mentioned a ghastly figure. I did not believe it, but I did not go in and see Nanny. I did not want to look at the dead. And yet I was impelled to go to the Eastern Cemetery.

In the mortuary the fallen soldiers of the Government army lay strewn with flowers, loaded with wreaths, and decked with blue and white ribbons. All the people passed by and hardly one looked in. No more did I. To the right and the left, through the wooden doors that led to the courts and gardens of the cemetery, a multitude of working-men's wives, broken-down men, girls, and weeping school-children stumbled towards the sheds where old wreaths and withered flowers were thrown away. Joining these mourners and seekers I came to a long shed, airless like a cellar, with windows at the sides. On the dirty floor lay the dead workers: flung down, straight, crooked, on the back or on the side. Only their feet were set in a straight line against the wall. There was a horrible smell of blood and death. The people shuffled over the reddened shavings, from man to man. All around me they were murmuring, sobbing, wailing, and whimpering, bending down now and again over the dead, to whom little labels or bits of cardboard were attached, bearing a name or number. I could hardly breathe, I wanted to escape, but a number of people surrounded me, standing in front and behind, and pushed me gently onwards. For several moments I stared at the wall, and then at the lifeless bodies lying there. I was sick at heart. I clenched my fists vehemently and pulled myself together. I tried to count — twenty, forty, more, seventy, still more, a hundred, and yet more again. I stopped counting. I could not go on. My eyes were streaming. I was cold, and shivered. Most of the dead men were in rags, one lay in a blood-stained shirt, another showed an artery hanging out of a funnel-shaped wound in the neck, a third had lost his lower jaw, or his nose; here was one pierced by two or three bullets, or more, and there a man with his head covered, beside him another with half his head blown away, with his brains run out and only a small piece of bone left at the back of the skull. One had the label tied to his toe, because all the rest of his body was so torn and

blood-stained. The weeping and wailing grew louder. The terrified eyes of the seekers were awful.

When I came out it seemed as if the whole town smelt of death. In Nymphenburg I found a telegram from the dark girl: "Arrive tomorrow nine o'clock. Meet me." There were visitors. I gulped down my food, drank, even talked, but it did not seem to be myself that did it all. All night in my sleep I counted incessantly and saw nothing but the foul, gruesome cellar. I got up quite early and washed myself for at least an hour; then at last I dressed and went into the city. I bought flowers. Even they smelt of the air in that place. Just before the people were shut off from the platform, somebody behind me called my name. I turned round quickly. A soldier gripped my sleeve and said curtly:

"You are Mr. Graf?" and led me to the station guard. I almost breathed a sigh of relief. At last, at last, I thought.

The officer examined my papers carelessly again. The soldiers lounging near eyed me malignantly.

"Take him to the police," said the officer. I did not want to speak at all, and yet blurted out: "Please ring up Nymphenburg ——"

"Come along," interrupted the soldier, and led me to the police headquarters. All the way I carried the flowers, quietly, almost scornfully, as if I were to present them at any moment.

I was not examined, but taken straight to the entrance hall of the prison. There was a long table; the warder took away everything that I had with me with an air of indifference. He made a note, too, that the flowers had been handed over. The soldier turned away. Another warder led me to cell 13. It was a room with about nine wooden benches, all occupied. In addition, there were people standing on every inch of the floor space. It was impossible to walk about; one could only push past one's neighbours with difficulty and get a breath of air occasionally at the two small, open, barred windows. The company around me was a strange medley, chiefly workmen, one or two waiters and illicit traders, a gentleman in a light-coloured sports suit, and an editor in spectacles.

"Hullo, you innocent too?" asked a saucy workman ironically, and they all laughed. I laughed myself.

"Illicit trade?" asked the waiter.

The air was thick with smoke, and perspiration, and all foul smells. In the water-closet at the back an old, bearded workman was sitting all the time, grunting and struggling and complaining of the pain of his piles. A little group sat on a bench in a corner in a crowded circle and played a noisy game of cards. Many whistled and sang and chatted, and there were others who just stared dumbly and vacantly before them. Once I had realized the position somewhat, I grew easier in my mind. At any rate it was not solitary confinement, at least I was with a crowd and there would be constant variety in a small way, I reflected calmly. We soon made friends. I made inquiries of my neighbours and nearly always heard the same story. "Red activities" was the unvarying, patient answer. Nobody cared. Nobody thought of the morrow, everyone submitted, as best he might, and accepted the whole situation. From time to time the door opened and a new prisoner was thrust in.

"Good Lord! we've no room as it is!" was the general exclamation of annoyance.

"It will soon be emptier," said the warder, and shut the door again.

"Yes, when a dozen more are shot!" cried most of the company scornfully. And then the new-comer stood like a poodle under the pump, and everybody laughed with the malicious joy of the condemned. "Aha, you're innocent too are you?" If he said yes, and tried to protest his innocence they laughed still louder, with good-humoured jests: "Oh, yes, we're all innocent, comrade! But you needn't say anything about it. It's simple enough. Whether you've done anything or not, you'll be shot. The most sensible thing is to say right away that you've accounted for twenty Whites."

"Your play!" came from the card-playing corner, and then: "Ah; trumps! A ten of hearts. It's ours!" added the other player.

In a few minutes the new-comer found his feet and was one of ourselves. The cell was packed fuller and fuller. We stood like

sardines, it became hotter and hotter, there were lice and fleas, bugs and Russian vermin. I elbowed my way through the crowd, raised myself by the bars of the window, and looked down into the courtyard. All around were piles of rifles and companies of soldiers, machine-guns, and baggage-wagons. I saw peering heads in other windows opposite, we shouted to one another and signalled. Suddenly a soldier down below seized his rifle, pointed it, and yelled up to us: "Back there! Back, you dogs!" Then for a short time the windows were blank. And so the hours passed. It grew dusk, a light in the ceiling was turned on, two warders brought some thin soup and an army roll for each of us.

"And what about sleeping?" I asked.

"Sleeping?" laughed one of my comrades. "That's simple enough. You've got your two good feet— Well,—you just stand on one, and then on the other, and you may have luck and get a bench."

And so bedtime came. People really lay upon and underneath the benches, piled one upon another. The rest tried to sleep standing, or leaning against the wall or one another. But that would not do for long. We began to fidget: all of us who were standing swayed sideways, lurched, and moved sleepily. People murmured curses and began to grumble, they started conversations and stopped in exhaustion. The hours of darkness dragged terribly slowly. Our eyes smarted, our bodies itched, each one of us scraped and rubbed against his neighbour, who gave a little growl and snorted heavily. In one corner a consumptive who had been brought in that afternoon lay groaning; he gasped and coughed and seemed as if he must vomit, and then spat. In another a man was talking and striking out in his sleep. Those lying beside and above him woke up, waked him, and tried to find somewhere else to lie. Several were fighting for the water-closet, the water flowed noisily, and somebody scolded and demanded silence. After what seemed like an endless night the dawn began to break and the pale light fell on the desolate pile of sleepers, who began slowly to stir. There was a tin can of black coffee and more army bread, and some of us were allowed to go to the lavatories in small companies.

The dark girl had arrived and inquired for me at the police station. But she was not admitted. The warder merely handed me a tin of jam, some bread, and a few cigarettes through the square hole in the door. Like everybody else, I shared what I had. The cigarettes were smoked communally to the last stump, then one of the prisoners flicked off the glowing tip and chewed what was left.

"Schuster!" bawled the warder again. The man whose name was called went out at the door. He was placed between two soldiers who led him up the stone steps.

"Mates, they're beginning the trials at last," said a stunted workman. I was told that some of the prisoners had been there five or even eight days without being interrogated. Sometimes a man returned after he had been fetched away, sometimes he never reappeared. Some thought he had been shot, others that he had been taken to another prison. "They'll hardly shoot anyone here. Just at first perhaps! Not now. We may consider ourselves lucky for being caught so late," said an old workman, and began to tell of the executions at the slaughter-house and the cattle-yard and in the cellar off the Court Brewery. They had stood far more civilians than Red Guards against the wall—innocent people, denounced and arrested at random; they were just shot without trial, he said. It was all true. Later on even the police report and that of the Social Democratic War Committee had to admit as much.

I told them what I had seen at the Eastern Cemetery.

"Yes, those were the ones supposed to be shot under martial law," said another comrade. "I say, you didn't see any women among the dead, did you?"

"No."

"They cleared them away, so as not to look so cowardly," he said.

A silence ensued.

"And that's what we risked our lives for in the war," someone growled.

The door opened. A new prisoner entered. He was a workman of about forty with a hunted look. He stopped and gazed, as if he

would like to devour everybody. When we spoke to him pleasantly he suddenly broke into a terrible howl, rushed at the door, and tried to tear it open, shrieking again and again: "My wife is dying! My wife! Let me out!"

The warder came and swore, and went away again. The man began to scream horribly, and rushed about like a madman; he found the lavatory and kicked at it with his heavy boots. We held him down and calmed him to the best of our ability. He lay on the bench, shivering, stared at the ceiling with frenzied eyes, and then again shouted in a terrible voice: "My wife! Oh, the dogs! The butchers! A-a-ah!" And then he sobbed and sobbed.

Another was thrust in, and in a flash the sobbing man was at the door, but it was already shut. The madman tore at it again and then fell down, pale and foaming with rage and struck out on all sides. We laid him on the bench again. Someone dipped his handkerchief in the flowing water of the closet and put it on the hot forehead of the screaming man. His despairing sobs began once more, and then the consumptive cried too, coughing and constantly breaking out again.

The new arrival told how Leviné-Nissen had been seized.

"They'll shoot him like a dog!" somebody said.

"Sure to! He may be ever so much in the right, but they'll make away with him," declared another.

"He must be here in the police headquarters," said the new-comer. Those standing round him raised their heads and looked at him.

"Here? In here? The police headquarters?"

"Yes, in here—he must be in one of the solitary cells."

All at once everybody crowded round the new-comer and questioned him; the indifference was suddenly dispelled and every face was eager.

"Here? Are you quite sure? Really? Here, at the police headquarters?"

The new-comer repeated his affirmation. We all knew now and each one gazed into his neighbour's eyes. There was a silent pause

except for the two men's sobs; then all at once several in the middle of the room shouted: "Hurrah! Hurrah for Leviné-Nissen!" And everyone took up the cry like a sudden signal of courage.

"Don't shout *that*, it will be the worse for us," the man in the sports suit admonished us pitifully.

"Coward!" someone bawled at him menacingly, and as if at a given signal the whole cell repeated: "Hurrah! Hurrah for Leviné-Nissen! Hurrah!"

And now all the cells around raised answering cries, above and below, to the left and the right, on all sides, the whole building roared: "Hurrah for Leviné-Nissen!" Down in the courtyard a shot rang out. We all crowded to the window. From below came harsh commands.

"Hold your noise! Back from the window! Back! Stop that row up there! Back! Back!" yelled soldiers' voices, and suddenly they fired two or three shots upwards, so that those at the window darted back into the cell as if they had been struck. There was silence for a moment. Then angry cries from all the cells:

"Dogs! Filthy swine! Wind-bags! Give it to us hot!"

"I — I said so, I said so, now it will be the worse for us!" wailed the man in the sports suit, but nobody listened. Again and again infuriated prisoners ran to the window and shouted down curses. We were all possessed with the courage of indignation, and even the illicit traders and the timid editor stormed.

And because of this mood I began, with a few standing near me, to sing the Marseillaise. More and more joined in, our cell sang, and once again the whole building sang. It was only a pity that most of them knew no more than the one verse.

"Quiet! Quiet, you fellows!" came the shrill command again from the court below. We struck up "The International."

"Stop that! Hold your noise up there!" Again the threatening command.

"A mess and a photograph!" someone bawled down to the court below, and laughter re-echoed on all sides.

"And now let's sing the fine song: 'Oil the guillotine!'" I said

boldly, and, as nobody knew it, I recited the verses eagerly, going from one to another, and taught everyone in the cell.

"Now, then! Now, begin, now, then!" I shouted, and waved my arms to rouse my companions and beat time: 'Oil the guillotine! Oil the guillotine!'" They all joined in. The air fairly reverberated. Suddenly we all broke off. Those at the window gave a hurried warning: "They're coming now!"

"God have mercy, we are lost!" whimpered the man in the sports costume, and leaned against the wall as white as a sheet. We hustled one another as usual and talked indifferently.

"Yes, yes, they're coming. Hark! Hark!" someone called from near the door. We listened. Down below we heard a tumult and beating at the doors of cells. Then the tread of heavy boots ascending the stone steps.

"Nobody was singing!" someone cried under his breath. "If anyone lets on, he's done for!"

Everyone understood. The door opened, and a lieutenant, carrying a revolver and a dog-whip, marched in with three soldiers.

"Who was singing here!? It was here! Answer!" he asked sharply. No answer. We all gazed at him dumbly. He brandished the dog-whip, positively greedy to strike.

"It was here. Who was singing?!"

Silence.

"Am I to have an answer or not?" menacingly.

"No one was singing here. There are two fellows crying back there." The answer was given quietly at last by a gigantic workman with remarkably broad shoulders, and you could hear plainly how most of his comrades breathed a sigh of relief. The officer stood for a few moments in this atmosphere of sullen silence, wheeled rapidly, looked round once again, and exclaimed harshly: "Just wait, you fellows. We'll put you all against the wall!" But he failed to impress us. He left the room with his soldiers, clattering his spurs. For a while we waited in silence, and all faces were calm.

At last the editor said: "I'll remember that." Then we began to talk again.

At first it was really quite entertaining, only I could have wished to escape the nights, and when in the daytime I looked out of the barred window up to the fair, blue sky, I grew angry and impatient. For four or five days I felt that I was just waiting, but after a time the hours began to drag unbearably. At moments everyone was unapproachable and sullen.

Our friends and relatives were now allowed to bring us food and hand it in through the hole in the door. The dark girl came almost every day, we exchanged a few hasty words, and that was all. Once, too, my wife came and lamented. I could say nothing in reply, and was glad that the warder only allowed her a few minutes.

At the end of a week I was called up for trial. Details regarding me were noted in a room where each interrogating clerk was questioning a prisoner. Then the fat little officer asked me: "Have you any statement to make?"

"That was what I was going to ask you," I retorted impudently.

"What?" asked the police officer sharply.

"Yes, I wanted to ask what statement you have to make against me," I repeated with suppressed anger.

"Then you have no statement to make?"

"No."

The man asked again: "Have you witnesses for your defence?"

"Well," I said slowly, and reflected a little, "if there is no accusation, I hardly need witnesses for my defence."

"Then you have no statement whatever to make?" asked the officer curtly, with peevish haste.

"No." He wrote, and I had to sign a deposition.

When I returned to the cell there were fresh arrivals. All workmen. One stood sadly beneath the window all the time and gazed in front of him. When we questioned him he answered: "They mean to ruin me — I was in the Luitpold School, I had come to fetch my pay — now I'm a murderer of hostages."

He said no more. He was quiet and depressed. Within four days his hair was grey. Later he was condemned to fifteen years' penal servitude.

A plump baker of medium height had been brought in with him. He was always in good spirits and confessed freely that he had seen the hostages shot; he had been given a rifle and held it for another man who had to leave the ranks. Later he was condemned to death and shot. His name was Pürzer. He was ready to give a helping hand to anyone; he made rough jests, and there was something of a good-humoured animal about him.

Once the warder shouted through the hole in the door: "Kastenberger!" The workman who had cried so passionately for his wife at the beginning sprang up from the bench, where we always let him lie, and rushed to the opening.

"Your wife is dead," cried the warder curtly and indifferently, and he turned away. Kastenberger stood stock still for a few moments and stared before him. All who were near him expected a new outbreak of frenzy, but the man only staggered a little, gasped, and crept back to his couch. He turned his face to the wall without speaking a word. In the night we suddenly heard shrieks in that corner and dull thuds, and gasps like a death-rattle. Kastenberger was knocking his head violently against the wall, again and again, and when several of his companions overpowered him he nearly bit off the finger of one. There was a terrifying uproar. We raised the alarm and reported to the warder. He went away again. Quiet was not restored for nearly an hour. Next day Kastenberger lay with a serious wound in his head and his back covered with blood. He did not stir when we spoke to him, and he let us spread the dirty, damp sacking over him and wipe him down. They did not take him away for two days.

One day the dark girl called through the hole in the door: "The lawyer says they will probably keep you under preventive arrest."

Next day I said to her: "They are going to keep me under preventive arrest."

"Oskar? — Who says so?"

"No one, but it's true," I repeated. The dark girl looked sad and anxious, and hastened to go. I held my head in my hands. I observed a dullness creeping over me. I could not keep my thoughts distinct.

I leaned against the wall and shut my eyes. There was a constant, unchanging noise all round me. Yes, yes, yes, I was in prison, oh, yes, it was only my comrades talking, oh, yes, outside the sky was bright, yes, this was the police headquarters, yes, that was it. I began to recover myself.

This strange condition recurred again and again. I was limp and broken and unspeakably weary for lack of sleep; and so I dragged on in uncertainty. At last I managed by artifice to get a place on the bench and sank into what seemed vacant, black darkness. I slept like the dead.

"Graf! Graf! Get up! Come out!" A comrade shook me till I woke. Hardly conscious, I stumbled after a group of people, then we stood below in the courtyard beside a police lorry; and now, when the fresh air blew upon me, my brain began to clear at last.

We were driven to the old military prison in Cornelius Street. There I was put in a small cell with one bench along with two other comrades.

"Thank the Lord, we can lie down and breathe here," said the eldest of the party. "Each one shall have one night on the bench," we agreed. At this moment we heard a step outside and the lock creaked. A soldier appeared and called my name.

"Come out," he said, and I followed.

"You are discharged," he told me at the door of the prison, "and there's somebody waiting for you out there."

My heart stood still for a moment and I stared at the man as if I had lost my senses. He pushed me out into the open.

The dark girl was standing in the street. We clung together like people saved from drowning. "Never, never forget!" I stammered. We went on our way.

Epilogue

I WAS TEN YEARS OLD when somebody who had been trained by soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers, entered my life and took my education in hand. Ten years old when somebody began to give orders, shouted at me, beat me, and beat me again.

I was ten years old when I began to know what compulsion is, and began to hate it, with blind hatred.

I was ten years old, in the fifth class of the primary school, when we made our first confession and were then prepared for our first communion. The priest who instructed us told us of the vast change that we should undergo through receiving the body of the Lord. He gave us many instances of the torments suffered by those who received it unworthily, by the "thieves of the Lord."

Such sinners were suddenly struck by lightning from a clear sky, they suffered lifelong sorrow, illness, unrest, paralysis. The pangs of conscience drove these thieves of the Lord out into the world and made them commit crimes. Not seldom they ended their days in penal servitude, and after death they were met by the everlasting torments of hell.

But for the penitent and the pure there was peace and joy, miracles and visions.

I listened eagerly. I learned my lesson. I guarded myself from every sin, lived in perpetual, tense anxiety, lest I should experience something that would harm my soul. Often I did not sleep till far into the night and murmured unceasing prayers. I talked with God in simple faith. After every meal I rinsed my mouth and brushed my teeth with exaggerated care; God should enter not only into a pure soul, but into a pure stomach as well.

Frequently I forgot everything and was beaten at school and at home; I was in terror, terror, terror!

When I was alone I was seized with delicious ecstasy, was beside myself with joy, as I pictured what it would be like when the Lord entered into me.

I did not feel blows, everything about me was erased from my consciousness. I felt as though all my surroundings were unsubstantial and unreal.

Then again came the fear, the terrible fear, of sudden sin, followed all at once by a stabbing mistrust, a shrinking from all mankind.

My mother was very pious. She had received the Lord again and again, but there was no change in her. My brothers and sisters were thoughtless gossips; they had often received the Lord, but there was nothing to be seen of the effect. All the villagers were either pious or sinful, but every one of them had swallowed the Lord time without number, and there was no sign of any transformation.

My father swore, so that the whole house often shook; he drank; every year he went to a famous place of pilgrimage, and after confession he received the body of the Lord; afterwards he got drunk at some tavern, and next day he swore and blasphemed just as before. He was nowise altered. Everybody received the Lord over and over again, and no one was transported by visions, nobody was changed. They all remained the same, exactly the same.

I was perplexed.

What did it mean?

This fact, that they all remained unchanged after receiving the Sacrament, that no alteration could be observed? That God left no mark on those to whom He had imparted Himself?

I looked at my father, my mother, my brothers and sisters, the villagers, all of them.

Suddenly I was overcome with horror.

They were all thieves of the Lord! The Devil was lurking in readiness to seize them all. They were all assigned to hell. All of

them were condemned to burn and suffer, to burn and suffer to all eternity.

Often I cried far into the night. I had terrifying dreams. I hid in the hay when my father swore, and often my heart stood suddenly still, for at any moment lightning from a clear sky might — nay — must — strike him. It might be, it must be, that my father would be struck dumb of a sudden, or fall dead. He might! He must!

I hid and let them call me again and again without answering. I no longer ate my food. I hardly slept at all. I cried out suddenly in the night, and only felt protected during religious instruction at school.

Then the sacred ceremony took place.

I do not remember how I behaved. I felt a wafer on my tongue and gulped it down. I opened my eyes wide.

Now the illumination must come! Now the inward fire must be kindled!

We retired to our places to pray. My limbs moved just as before. I was not treading upon air. I saw and felt everything just the same as I had always seen and felt.

Nothing was changed! Nothing, absolutely nothing!

The priest had lied! He had lied!

There was no God in the Sacrament. There was no God at all! It was all a lie! A lie! A lie! A lie!

No lightning would strike from a clear sky, there was no such place as hell! My fears, my prayers, my tears — all, all for nothing!

There was no God, no peace, no miracle, no vision! There was nothing at all! Nothing whatever!!

There is nothing more lonely than the human adolescent whose heart is unprepared. No one waits so eagerly for miracles and for love as he.

I was barely seventeen. I had read Shakespeare and Schopenhauer, Tolstoi and Stirner, Heine and Strindberg, Nietzsche and Maupassant, Balzac and Wedekind, Ibsen, Zola, and Flaubert, besides Schiller and Grabbe, Bakunin and Herzen — quantities of books.

I knew long passages by heart, quoted them, loved them, was moved almost to tears by them, and intoxicated myself with their beauty. I repeated the words almost as if they were a helpful prayer, and yet they were a closed book to me.

I walked the city streets by night in restless uncertainty. Again and again this one dull, tormenting consciousness penetrated my bewildered thoughts: you belong to nobody, and nobody belongs to you! You are alone and quite unwanted.

Disgust and despondency possessed me and became so overwhelming, so lacerating, so terrible, that I desired nothing but to flee from my own misery. Sometimes I gazed almost imploringly at the people who passed by, started suddenly, and turned hastily away, like a man who is afraid to disclose his inmost thoughts; I walked on faster without aim, down a street and back again, round a block of houses and back again, repeated the process, and in the end hardly knew where I was, where I stood, why I was walking or, indeed, why I was in the world at all.

"Come with me," said a prostitute to me one day. For the first time in my whole life!

I stared at her, my heart stood still, then suddenly the blood raced and burned in my veins.

She smiled a withered smile and nodded, and I went with her. We reached her room. She turned on the light. I reeled and fell upon her, embraced her wildly, wanted to kiss her and love her, as only a young creature can love for the first time.

"Ow! Get out! you're tearing my blouse. Go slow! Don't be in such a fury!" she said, resisting and demanding money. I released her from my embrace and my whole body seemed paralysed. I stood there, stupid and stockish, and let her do with me as she liked. She took the money from my purse herself, undressed in a business-like way, and lay down. Everything grew hazy and seemed to fade from my sight. I felt like a hot coal on her cold body. I heard nothing more but her ugly, hoarse chuckle.

Slowly, very slowly I began to see clearly again: the green wallpaper, the yellow light, the sofa, and her broad, fleshy face. I raised

myself and sat beside her, utterly wretched. I wanted to smile, but my face seemed to be frozen; I wanted to talk and began to stammer. I laid my hot head on her breast and gulped down my sobs. Suddenly I began to tell her my story, then stammered, broke off, and clung round her more helplessly than before. My tears flowed hot and cruel.

“Take everything! Do what you like with me! Oh, I love you so! I want to marry you! I’ll work, I’ll do anything. I can’t go on without you! I’ll make you happy!” I moaned on her breast, shrieking and sobbing.

It seemed as if I were slowly sinking out of existence.

She started and shivered, disengaged herself rapidly and got up. She regarded me with anger and alarm, grumbling and complaining. She got into her clothes hastily, raised me up, helped me on with my jacket and saw me out into the street with all good speed.

“Be quiet, lad! Be quiet! Quiet! There, straight along. Please go! Go! Do get away!” were her parting words, and she ran off in consternation.

All around it was black. The massive walls of the houses towered menacing up to the dark sky. I felt my way along, on to a horrible desolation.

And from that there was no escape.

Miracles were dead. Faith and love had crumbled to dust. Hope seemed a meaningless folly.

Added to desolation came the mistrust of every impulse from within, enmity towards all the world, and a shrinking hatred of all mankind. Cunning and deceit were, to my mind, the only weapons of defence against all assaults. My world shrank to minute proportions, it was simply and solely: myself.

Quite bluntly: myself.

Chatterboxes and enthusiasts tried to change me. I made a show of conversion, feigned friendship, made use of their most convincing phrases and mental tricks, and remained my old self.

Ideas and events pressed around me. I did not refuse to admit

them; oh, no! I found them entertaining and in my inmost soul I smiled at them incredulously. In the last resort it always came to the same thing: protect yourself! Protect yourself, or you will be trodden underfoot! Eat or be eaten!

The war came, and meant no more to me than a unique piece of foolery. My aim was to escape from it as quickly as possible. It had come for somebody's sake, and I wanted to live for my own sake alone.

It was 1917. I had freed myself from military service by persistent cunning. I was back in the city. Life flowed along in its old course. Nothing was changed. My work in the factory, the workmen, my employer, my landlady, hypocrisy, toadying, cant, suspicion of everybody, and calculation of my own advantage—it was all the same.

And I myself?

Why was I free?

But was I free?

No! A thousand times, no!!

Had I at any rate gained anything? Had my action benefited anybody? Had my example influenced anybody?

No! A thousand times, no!!

Again, then, nothing but emptiness. Again nothing but my stupid self.

Loathing possessed me; an intenser hatred of myself and all living things around me.

I stalked gloomily along the streets. Somebody laughed. I started convulsively: oh, to spring upon a man and strike him down! To strike down a multitude, and throttle them! And then to be shut up again, in the asylum or in prison. No matter where! Just to be the only one, and quite alone!!

I walked to and fro in my room, restless and despairing. To and fro. The whole night.

What am I?

What do I want?

To whom am I of use?

Always and ceaselessly. And always the reply: Nothing! Nothing!
Nobody!

I was bitter and perplexed.

Then suddenly: And yet *I am! I will!* I will serve, serve, serve — serve? But whom? Whom!?

That "whom" faced me, overwhelming —

Day broke and the morning light shone in at the window. I packed my box, wrote a letter to the master baker, and was about to run away.

But for what purpose, whither, from whom?

I tore up the letter, got ready, and went to work again. All was submerged in the everlasting sameness of my life.

I read books again, I tried my fortune with women, I married, I mixed with all manner of people, I caroused wildly and drank with them day and night, I was considered original, and confirmed the idea by my unspoken vanity and shrewd instinct — but I was utterly desolate. I began to write. "Man," I wrote one day, "has been from the beginning of time the most senseless and stupid of created things. Every beast, every plant, every drop of rain even is more reasonable, happier, and freer. All of these just are, and are content with that. But we imagine ourselves to be capable of something more, and that is our whole tragedy."

Life was what I wanted, life! I wanted to be, only to be, and nothing more.

It was shortly after Leviné had been shot. I was walking in the English Garden. A worker who had been with me in Cell 13 met me. We looked each other in the eyes, cautiously, almost suspiciously.

He nodded a cursory greeting and was going on.

"Comrade, we know each other," I said. He hesitated before speaking, eyed me timidly again, and smiled sadly. And now he seemed to recall everything.

"Yes, good God, yes," he said, and joined me.

We spoke little as we threaded our way through the strolling crowds; then we turned into a dark, deserted path, and after a while we sat down on a bench. At first he spoke of indifferent things, and all the time he was peering round about, as though he feared unseen eavesdroppers. The stillness grew deeper. The park seemed empty, here and there a sleeping bird stirred in the branches, and occasionally we heard the hum of the cars from the distant city. He took breath, leaned closer against me and gripped my arm. The moonlight fell on his hunted face.

"Do you remember? — Kastenberger?" he whispered under his breath.

I nodded and asked: "Yes, what happened to him?"

"He began to rave again when they were transferring him — They murdered him," he told me.

"Hm," I murmured, shaking my head, and my blood ran cold.

"They shot my father in the Court Brewery Cellar — My wife had a premature delivery and isn't right in her head," he gasped, and began to stammer a little. "I was four years at the front — Wounded three times — I never wanted to have anything to do with the revolution — I've got no end of long testimonials — Each one of us in the factory was given a rifle — I gave mine up there on April 30th — Next day they fetched me when I was in bed — They beat me all the way to the police station — There ain't no God in heaven, there ain't." Tears welled in his eyes, he swallowed them and stopped. He broke down and leaned against me. I supported him. He sobbed brokenly.

"He was right, was Leviné. There are too many of us to please them. We are only dead men on leave, that's it. If only they'd shot me too," he stammered.

I could say nothing, but let him lean against me as he was, and did not stir. His head dropped and he wiped his eyes; his hat fell to the ground. He left it there. All at once I stroked his head several times without a word. Gradually he became quieter. There we sat, leaning against each other in the darkness, like two relics of a dead world.

"You mustn't be so bitter, comrade—Nothing has been in vain," I managed to say after a long time, and I rose: "Come, let us go ——"

He breathed a deep breath and rose, likewise. We walked along. I was dimly conscious that he began gradually to step out more firmly, that he was holding himself more erect. Suddenly he stood still and raised his clenched fist with a strange, unfamiliar gesture.

"Next time I will fight—I will fight to the last breath—Then at least I shall know it is for ourselves!" he cried with sullen rage. And he added in a tone of wonderful calm: "The hour will come!"

I shuddered a little and kept my eyes on him. He turned hastily towards me and pressed my hand. Silently and speedily he vanished into the darkness again. I stood still, reflecting; I wanted to call him and follow him, but I turned homewards. My heart burned within me. I recalled all the scenes stamped on my memory: the masses in the streets, the workers' army, the gloomy files of prisoners, the bodies of those who had been shot, and this one comrade. And it all impressed itself more sharply, more indelibly, on my mind. And this man, raising his clenched fist, became legion.

"The hour will come!" I shouted, exultant in spite of myself.

"Nothing has been in vain!" I repeated, deeply affected.

My tiny world cracked and burst. I was more than merely "I." An immense joy irradiated my soul.

Through many shocks and convulsions I had attained insight, partial or complete. The terrors lay far behind me in bygone years.

One day I was wandering as a travelling artisan amongst the sandhills by the sea. It was night time. Suddenly it began to rain and thunder and lighten. The sea roared nearby. Not a tree, not a light to be seen. Darkness, nothing but darkness, and rain, rain, rain, howling wind, lightning flashes, thunder-claps. Every minute more terrible, more cruel. Raging wind. Beating rain.

Rain which suddenly threw me down like a helpless leaf. It battered me into the mud and swirled onto my shivering body with

such force as I have never known before or since. Rain which buried me without pity: alive, utterly defenceless, desolate.

And the trembling earth, the roaring heavens, the air flashing fire, the raging wind! And the sea boiled and shrieked, towered aloft and fell with a clatter. I screamed and groaned and sobbed. All around me crashed and quaked, roared and hissed and battered. I lay down helplessly and clasped my hands in passive prayer, crying again and again: "God! God!"

Then I lost consciousness.

When I awoke all was still. The air was shimmering around me. I staggered out of the mud and gazed at the radiant light.

And fell on my knees.

After a long tramp I reached a little town in a state of utter exhaustion. I still had a few marks. I spent the night at a little inn. When I entered my room, and saw pen and ink on the table, I suddenly felt impelled to write to somebody. Almost without knowing what I did I took a remnant of writing-paper from my breast-pocket.

I was no longer tired. My pen flew. The sentences were chopped, irregular, hasty.

When I had finished I glanced over the sheets; read them once, twice—a third time; and began to cry.

Overcome with weariness I lay down on the bed without undressing and tried to sleep, shutting my eyes firmly, resolutely.

But it was no good.

I shivered with cold, starting convulsively.

I rose again, lit the lamp, took my pen and began to write.

All of a sudden something in my mind became uncannily clear. I was possessed by a strange calm. My limbs ached. My eyes smarted. I wrote——

Behind me lay the end in broken fragments.

A new beginning opens wide the gates of day.

Beneath my feet the very earth rings clear,

My steps are firm with hope.

Yet once again I craved to look back in the past ;
Brothers I see from out the mist approaching,
They travel the same road, and the same burden bends them.
The daily round and all dumb sorrows of our time have stamped
A radiant " Notwithstanding ! " on their foreheads.
One glance alone we cast,
Then man by man strides past
For deep within us grows the eternal soul, chastised of God
In His unbounded love,
A lamp of grace that shines upon our way.

A smile passed over my face as I sent this greeting to the dark girl: " I love you ! I love you unutterably ! I am coming back as soon as I can. A miracle has burst upon me, and salvation, faith and hope. I love you ! I love you unutterably. . . . "

A NOTE ON THE TYPE
IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

This book is composed on the Linotype in Old Style No. 7. This face is largely based on a series originally cut by the Bruce Foundry in the early seventies. It has always been a popular and satisfactory face for book work because while it is compactly designed, so that a large number of words appear on a page, its compactness is not accompanied by any loss in legibility.



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